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Let us be careful; Let us follow social distancing; Let us remain at home; We will surely Triumph over the Corona Virus.

Thiru. Edappadi K. Palaniswami
- Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu

Editor and Publisher

Dr. P. Sankar I.A.S.,
Director of Information &
Public Relations and Ex-officio
Additional Secretary to Government

Administrative Editor

Dr. R. Baskaran
Deputy Director (Publications)

Joint Editor
M.A. Roshan Kurshidha Begam
Assistant Director

Associate Editors/Public Relations Officers
S. Kamala
D. Kalaiarasan

Assistant Editors
S. Manjula
M. Mohanavalli
M. Manimekalai
A. Mathan

Senior Artist
R. Samundeeswari

Designed by
P.A. Louis
G. Murali Krishnan

Designed & Printed at :
Tamilarasu Press
Rajiv Gandhi Salai, Kanagam, Taramani,
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Tel : 044-2254 2221 / 2254 2224
E-mail : tamilarasujournal@gmail.com
Website : www.tndipr.gov.in

- Hon'ble Chief Minister seeks release in advance of 2020-2021 grants due to States 04
- Hon'ble Chief Minister urges scaling up of fiscal deficit limit to 4.5 per cent 07
- Tamil Nadu Leads war against spread of Corona virus 11
- People's curfew to stop Corona virus from spreading 14
- Hon'ble Chief Minister writes to Hon'be Prime Minister seeking speedy grant of Rs.4,000 crore 17
- Hon'ble Chief Minister urges aggregate amount of Rs.1 lakh crore for States 20
- Hon'ble Chief Minister answers journalists' queries after reviewing anti-Corona measures with District Collectors 27
- Hon'ble Chief Minister lauds Amma's visionary outlook for State's excellent road infrastructure 57

First Wrapper

Hon'ble Prime Minister of India **Shri. Narendra Modi** had a review meeting for the third time with the Chief Ministers of the various States through video conferencing on various preventive steps and measures needed to arrest the spread of the Corona Virus. The Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu **Thiru. Edappadi K. Palaniswami** detailed the preventive steps and relief measures being taken by the Tamil Nadu Government and the required assistance from the Central Government in this regard.

Tamil Nadu's hands on COVID-19 record presented in video conference with Hon'ble Prime Minister

Hon'ble Chief Minister seeks release in advance of 2020-2021 grants due to States

Speech of the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu
Thiru. Edappadi K.Palaniswami in the Video Conference Meeting
with Hon'ble Prime Minister **Shri. Narendra Modi** on 02.04.2020

Good Morning.

Hon'ble Prime Minister,

Hon'ble Defence Minister,

Hon'ble Home Minister and

other Chief Ministers,

At the outset I thank the Hon'ble Prime Minister for leading the nation in tackling the present COVID-19 Challenge. My Government has taken the following steps:-

- State Disaster Management Authority has conducted 11 meetings and I have issued various directions, as well as addressing the situation on a daily basis.
- Section 144 Cr.P.C. has been invoked statewide.
- Public Health and the Disaster Management Laws have been invoked.
- A Task Force headed by the Chief Secretary, including experts has been set up.
- 12 teams headed by senior IAS officers have been set up to implement and monitor all the activities related to COVID-19 challenge.
- Massive publicity campaign on social distancing & various do's and don'ts, launched.
- Interstate transport has been stopped, except for movement of goods.
- Availability of essential commodities for people during this lockdown period has been ensured.
- Around 2.10 lakh international passengers screened and 77,330 of them are under home quarantine for 28 days.
- A detailed micro plan for each District has been drawn to meet the health care needs of

the old age people, ante-natal and post-natal mothers and infants, patients on chronic treatment like TB, HIV, Hypertension and Diabetes, patients needing dialysis and is being executed by mobile health teams in the Districts.

- Massive cleaning and disinfection of all public places is being done by all Local Bodies.
- Health Department has identified 22,000 isolation beds, 5,934 ICU beds in Government and private sector so far.
- As on date 2,641 samples have been tested, 1,631 persons have been isolated.
- As on date 234 COVID-19 positive cases have been confirmed in Tamil Nadu. These cases are identified, isolated or quarantined by the State on a war footing.
- Containment plan is being executed in all Districts and Corporations, wherever positive cases have been identified, so that the entire area is sanitized and sealed off to prevent further spread of COVID-19.
- Omanthurar Medical College Hospital, Chennai & Coimbatore ESI Medical College Hospital have been declared as dedicated COVID-19 hospitals. Apart from this, one hospital in each District has been identified and provided with treatment facilities for COVID-19.
- Every person under isolation is provided nutritious and immune boosting meal to combat the infection.
- Testing facilities have been expanded across the State. Presently the State has 11 Government facilities and 6 private labs for COVID-19 testing. This needs to be increased by having atleast one per District.
- 530 Doctors, 1,000 Staff Nurses and 1,508 Lab Technicians have been newly appointed.
- The protective gears for all field personnel namely masks, PPE kits, have been sourced from multiple agencies. We need your support.
- Self Help Groups across the State have been used for manufacturing masks and sanitizers.
- More than 45,000 volunteers have registered so far, which includes 1,100 doctors and 3,500 paramedical staff.
- An immediate relief package of 3,280 crore rupees was sanctioned by me to provide 1,000 rupees per family along with free ration commodities of 15 Kg rice, 1 Kg dhal, 1 Kg sugar and 1 litre of oil for the month of April for Rice Card holders. All registered street vendors are provided with an additional 1,000 rupees.

- A monthly allowance of 1,000 rupees for all unorganized sector labourers, construction workers, auto drivers, has been provided along with free ration commodities.
- Migrant labourers who were stranded in my State, are being taken care by the District Collectors by providing stay and free rations. 153 number of camps have been set up, housing 11,957 migrant workers, who are being provided with hot cooked food & medical facilities. I have also written to all Chief Ministers concerned, to provide all support to the Tamils who are stranded in their States.
- Old age homes are provided with free cooked nutritious meal. Shelterless persons are given shelter and free cooked nutritious meal.
- "Amma Canteens" are functioning across the State to provide meals at subsidized rate.
- An additional 2 days wages under MGNREGS has been provided to cover those rural house holds, which are dependent on this employment for their livelihood.

I WOULD LIKE TO PLACE THE FOLLOWING REQUESTS TO THE HON'BLE PRIME MINISTER FOR KIND CONSIDERATION.

- Test kits supply should be increased.
- PPEs, N-95 Masks and ventilators has to be provided in sufficient numbers for managing the COVID-19. I had requested 3,000 crore rupees among other requests for the above purchase.
- Tamil Nadu may be allocated 9,000 crore rupees, as requested earlier in my letter.
- As a one time measure, the fiscal deficit limits of 3% of GSDP may be relaxed for financial years 2019-2020 and 2020-2021.
- To meet out the additional expenditure arising due this pandemic, additional borrowing of 33% above the permitted level for fiscal year 2019-2020, may be allowed for 2020-2021.
- Grants due to States in 2020-2021 may be released in advance. 50 per cent of the Finance Commission grants to the Urban and Rural Local bodies can be released now. 50 per cent of the revenue deficit grant can be released now. The GST compensation amount due for the December-January 2019-2020 can be released immediately.
- Grants under the National Health Mission can be released immediately.
- The Ways and Means limit of the States which was increased by 30% by RBI should be doubled. The Ways and Means advances availed in the fiscal year 2020-2021 should be made interest free.

Thank you,

Vanakkam!

Hon'ble Chief Minister urges scaling up of fiscal deficit limit to 4.5 per cent

Speech of the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu
Thiru. Edappadi K.Palaniswami in the Video Conference Meeting
with Hon'ble Prime Minister on 11.04.2020

Hon'ble Prime Minister,

Hon'ble Defence Minister,

Hon'ble Home Minister,

other Chief Ministers and Officers,

Vanakkam.

At the outset, I thank you for your support and guidance in tackling the COVID-19 Challenge. I have taken the following steps and would like to make some suggestions.

✶ A Task Force headed by the Chief Secretary, and 12 teams headed by senior IAS officers are recommending various steps to arrest the spread of the virus and handling the infected people on which I am issuing immediate direction.

✶ Lockdown is implemented strictly.

✶ Train and flight services should not be resumed. I appeal to Hon'ble Prime Minister and other Chief Ministers not to allow inter State passengers movement.

✶ I request smooth supply of essential commodities like Dhal, Spices, etc., from other States through Railways and facilitate inter-State movement of these goods through lorries.

✶ I would like to request you that at this hour of prolonged lockdown, we should not allow a food crisis in the country. Sir, we should give total support to agriculture and I request you to announce a special package for Agriculture and Horticulture promotion.

✶ If the lockdown is extended, I request an additional funding as well as allotment of essential commodities to support the unorganised sector workers, agricultural labourers etc. They may be provided 2,000 rupees per family.

✶ Around 2.10 lakh international passengers screened and 93,146 of them are under home quarantine for 28 days.

✶ Massive disinfection of all public places is being done by all Local Bodies, regularly.

✶ Health Department has identified 32,371 isolation beds, 5,934 ICU beds in Government and private sector so far.

✶ As on date 8,410 samples have been tested, 1,891 persons have been isolated.

✶ As on date 911 COVID-19 positive cases have been confirmed in Tamil Nadu. The residential area of these persons identified as positive have been brought under a containment plan, in which the entire area

of 5 km radius is cordoned off and door to door survey is being done on a war footing to contain the spread.

- Testing of the contacts have to be done immediately for which I require rapid test kits. I have written to the Hon'ble Union Health Minister to provide 2 lakh test kits to Tamil Nadu.
- 21 Government hospitals and 155 private hospitals have been notified to provide treatment for the infected people.
- Presently the State has 12 Government facilities and 7 private labs for COVID testing. This needs to be increased by having atleast one per District.
- An immediate relief package of 3,280 crore rupees was sanctioned by me and we have provided 1,000 rupees per family to nearly 2 crore families, along with free ration commodities. All registered street vendors, all unorganized sector labourers, construction workers, auto drivers were provided with an additional 1,000 rupees.
- Migrant labourers who were stranded in Tamil Nadu, are being taken care by providing stay, free ration and cooked food.
- Daily, we are providing subsidized food to around 6 lakh poor through Amma Canteen.

I WOULD LIKE TO PLACE THE FOLLOWING REQUESTS TO THE HON'BLE PRIME MINISTER FOR KIND CONSIDERATION

- PCR and rapid test kits should be supplied by Government of India in large quantities immediately.
- PPEs, N-95 Masks, and ventilators has to be provided in sufficient numbers, for which I had earlier requested 3,000 crore rupees and the same may be sanctioned.
- Tamil Nadu may be allocated 9,000 crore rupees grant for launching a comprehensive plan for combating COVID-19 and its aftermath on the State's economy.
- Moreover, the fiscal deficit limits of 3% of GSDP may be increased to 4.5% for financial years 2019-2020 and 2020-2021.
- Additional borrowing of 33% above the permitted level for fiscal year 2019-2020, may be allowed for 2020-2021 for combating this pandemic.
- 50 per cent of the 2020-2021 Finance Commission grants to the Urban and Rural Local bodies can be released now.
- 50 per cent of the revenue deficit grant can be released now. The GST compensation due for December- January 2019-2020 may be released immediately.
- The Ways and Means limit of the States which was increased by 30% by RBI should be doubled and the advances availed in the fiscal year 2020-2021 should be made interest-free.
- I thank the Hon'ble Prime Minister for releasing of 510 crore rupees under SDRF. The 15th Finance Commission methodology has resulted in Tamil Nadu getting only 64.65% increase under SDRF, while for other States, it is 120.33%.

Sir, Tamil Nadu has been facing many Natural disasters continuously over the years namely, Vardah in 2016, severe drought followed by Ockhi cyclone in 2017, Gaja cyclone in 2018 and still got lesser allocation under SDRF. I also request an adhoc grant of 1,000 crore rupees from NDRF immediately to procure medical and protective material.

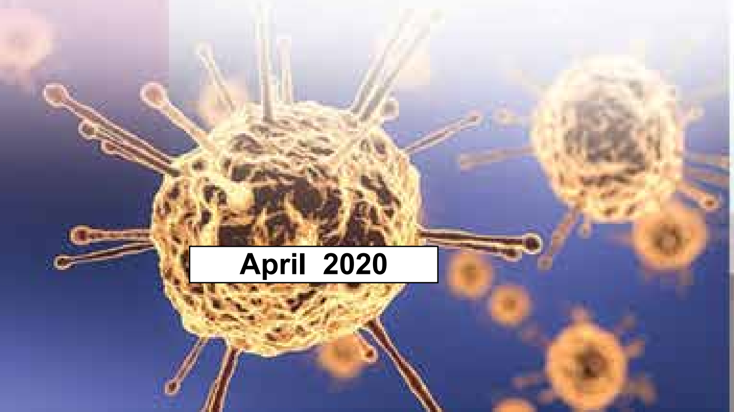
Thank you, Vanakkam!

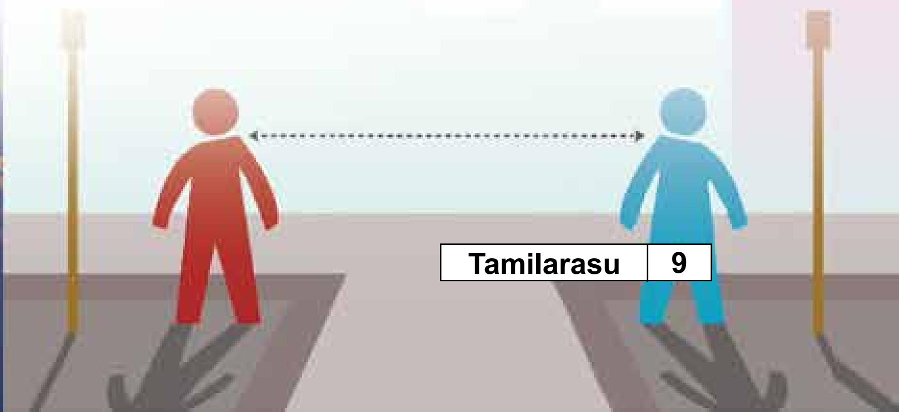
Hon'ble Chief Minister assures members of strong measures against Corona Virus

Explanation given by Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu **Thiru. Edappadi K.Palaniswami,** in the Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly on 17.03.2020, regarding preventive measures taken by the Tamil Nadu Government against Corona virus.*(English Translation)*

Hon'ble Speaker Sir,

Everybody mentioned about Corona Virus in the House. Yesterday, the Hon'ble Deputy Leader of the Opposition also mentioned about the Corona Virus. Subsequently, we conducted an advisory meeting in the evening itself. Hon'ble Minister for Health explained about the meeting in the House in detail. I do not want to go into it deeply. Hon'ble Leader of the Opposition also mentioned about this. There is no need for any apprehension. The State Government is fully involved in preventing the Corona Virus. The State Government has been taking all necessary preventive steps that should be taken. That is what the Hon'ble Minister for Health explained clearly. No need for any fear. Only one person was affected in Tamil Nadu against the State's population of 8 crore. They said that all of them should go to hospital to undergo tests. I have gone to the hospital and undergone the test. You may also go to the hospitals regularly and undergo the tests. It is common for people to be afflicted by diseases. Nobody can prevent it. In one form or other diseases affect people. As far as the Corona Virus is concerned, worldwide reports say that it is a dangerous disease. Reports have come that the Virus has already spread in 136 countries. Our fear is based on this report only. Both the Leader of the Opposition and





the Deputy Leader of the Opposition have mentioned about this in the House. The Hon'ble Minister for Health gave full explanation to clear their doubts. So, you need not have any fear. I would like to inform at this juncture that there is no need for adjourning the House. We will give full protection to the Members. If you want to test, the Government is ready to conduct medical tests for you also. At present, all the Hon'ble Members enter the House only after undergoing tests.

The State Government is conducting regular meetings under my chairmanship about the Corona Virus. Senior Ministers, Secretaries of various Departments, officials of Railways and Civil Aviation participate in the meeting and they are given directives about steps to be taken to prevent the spread of the virus.

Hon'ble Amma's Government is also considering the instructions and suggestions given by the Central Government and is taking steps on a war footing.

I have directed to set up a Task Force, consisting of official and non-official members under the chairmanship of the Chief Secretary to monitor the steps taken against the virus.

The following are the members of the Task Force:

Secretary of the Health and Family Welfare Department, Additional Chief Secretary of the Rural Development and Panchayat Raj Department, Additional Chief Secretary of the Municipal Administration and Water Supply Department, Additional Chief Secretary for Revenue and Disaster Management Department, Additional Chief Secretary for Labour and Employment Department, Principal Secretary for Information Technology Department, Principal Secretary for the Industries Department, Principal Secretary for Transport Department, Commissioner of Revenue Administration, Director General of Police, Director of Medical Education, Director of Public Health and Preventive Medicine Department, Director of Medicine and Rural Health Services Department, General Manager, Southern Railway, Director of Chennai Airport, Chairman in-charge of Chennai Port, one expert belonging to Public Health and a representative from the private enterprise.

I would like to inform the House that I had issued instructions to the task Force to meet at regular intervals and monitor whether instructions issued by the State Government are implemented properly and also take steps to prevent completely the spread of Corona disease in Tamil Nadu.

Tamil Nadu Leads war against spread of Corona Virus

Explanation given by the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu **Thiru. Edappadi K.Palaniswami,** in the Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly on 20.03.2020, about continuous protective measures taken by various Government Departments to prevent the spread of Corona Virus in Tamil Nadu. *(English Translation)*

Hon'ble Speaker Sir,

Hon'ble Leader of the Opposition and other Opposition Party leaders have expressed their anxiety over the spread of Corona Virus in the State and suggested preventive measures that the Government should take against the Corona Virus. I would like to inform the Government's stand on this issue.

The Tamil Nadu State Disaster Management Authority under my chairmanship has conducted 4 consultative meetings so far to review the position and has been issuing various orders now and then to various Departments.

Public Health Acts have been implemented .

A Special Task Force has been set up under the chairmanship of the Chief Secretary to monitor the implementation of the preventive measures against the Virus and take appropriate steps.

Awareness programmes on a large scale are being conducted for members of the public on do's and don'ts and on isolating oneself.

All schools, colleges, theatres, public malls, entertainment centres, exercise centres, swimming pools, tourist spots, religious centres, weekly markets, big textile showrooms and jewellery shops, where there are possibilities for a large gathering of people, have been directed to be closed till 31.03.2020.

Big gatherings of people have been banned and the public are advised against large gatherings.

Disease prevention measures have been taken in all airports, railway stations and bus stands. So far, 2 lakh people have been screened. Of these, houses of 2,984 are under watch, 32 passengers have been admitted in hospitals, 3 persons have been confirmed regarding the virus attack and given proper treatment and 1 person has been discharged from hospital.

Disease prevention measures are being taken at check-posts that have been set up in all the inter-State borders of the State.

Sufficient funds have been allotted to Local Bodies to take up disease prevention steps and cleaning activities in public transports and in places where people gather.

Preventive steps are being taken in co-ordination with the courts.

The Health and Family Welfare Department has identified isolation wards in Government and Private Hospitals and supplied the required medicines and medical equipment to them.

The Family Welfare Department is acting swiftly as per the guidelines issued by the Central Government and ICMR.

The Tamil Nadu Government is fully implementing the 9-point Disease prevention measures announced by the Hon'ble Prime Minister on 19.03.2020. All incoming passengers from abroad and other States are being examined and those who having symptoms of the disease are being admitted to hospitals. Those who travelled along with them are being kept in isolation in their houses and they are being watched through video conferencing by our doctors, who also give the necessary medical advice and counselling.

The people of Tamil Nadu should involve themselves completely in the preventive steps taken by the Tamil Nadu Government and help prevent the spread of Corona Virus.

To initiate action against the spread of Corona Virus, Rs.60 crore has been sanctioned to various Departments for purchase of necessary gadgets for disease prevention, sanitizers, masks, body vests and shoes for field workers.

As the Assembly is in session, all the vehicles coming to the Secretariat are sprayed with sanitizers. The body temperature of all visitors, including MLAs, who are coming to the Secretariat, is noted and disease prevention measures are taken.

At this juncture, I congratulate and thank all Government employees, doctors, nurses and para medical staff who are actively involved in disease prevention measures with dedication.

The Hon'ble Leader of the Opposition demanded that the Assembly be adjourned indefinitely. I would like to inform him that only if the Assembly is in session it would be possible to explain the State of affairs to the people. That is why the Assembly is in session. We can discuss people's issues in this forum only. You are also able to come out with issues because the Assembly is in session. We are also taking action against the problems represented by you.

People have elected us to serve them. You need not have any fear that the disease would spread because of our large gathering here. The disease has come to our State from other States and from abroad. The Government is fully involved in preventing the disease. I am explaining the steps taken by the Government because the Assembly is in session.

They have also brought to the notice of the Government some other issues. You said that small industries have been affected. The small industries have not closed and are functioning. For the employees to work safely, safety instructions are given by the Industries Department, Hon'ble Minister for Industries, Thiru. M.C.Sampath and his Department Secretary. The workers have been advised on the disease prevention instructions they should follow.

I have already informed you about the places where people gather in large numbers. Already the Task Force has met 4 times and the Hon'ble Senior Ministers, Hon'ble Ministers in charge of various Departments and officials belonging to various Departments, have been consulted and various decisions have been taken. Based on the decisions, disease prevention measures are being taken swiftly. Nobody need have any fear. Passengers coming from abroad or from other States are screened and if they are found to be afflicted by the disease, they are isolated and given treatment. One of the passengers was discharged as he had been completely cured. Those who came along with him have been kept in isolation in their houses and are being contacted through video conferencing for prescribing medicines and giving instructions. So nobody need have any fear. The Government is taking all these measures only to prevent the disease from spreading.

A Hon'ble Member belonging to the Congress, expressed the view that the disease spread in the USA and Italy because those countries failed to take preventive measures. Now a situation has arisen in which they are taking preventive measures. But it is not so in Tamil Nadu. Nobody has been affected in Tamil Nadu and all the affected cases are of those who have come from abroad. Yesterday one of our members said that those who wanted to come from Malaysia and Philippines have the disease. Those who went abroad for jobs want to return to India once they are affected by some disease. Their parents here are also worried. Those who are studying there and working there are also afraid. This is natural. They express their desire to come to India and get the permission from the Central Government and are brought to India. As those people are coming to India from countries where the disease is widely prevalent, they are subjected to isolation and undergo medical treatment examination. I would like to inform that not a single person in Tamil Nadu has the disease. No one need have any apprehension. Full medical check up is done here. As mentioned by me already, those who are coming by train, plane and bus from other States or abroad are screened as soon as they land here. People from other states are stopped at the State border and examined. If they are found have any symptom of the disease, they are immediately admitted in Isolation Ward and given proper treatment. Only if the Assembly is in session it will be possible to inform the people about the steps being taken by the Government. Similarly, the issues concerning the people can be brought to the notice of the Government by the Opposition parties, which will help the Government to take remedial action. I would like to share this information with the Hon'ble Members through you, Sir.

People's curfew to stop Corona Virus from spreading

Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu **Thiru. Edappadi K.Palaniswami's** Press Release on 20.03.2020. *(English Translation)*

The Hon'ble Prime Minister of India has announced several measures to prevent the spreading of Corona Virus. The Hon'ble Prime Minister has advised the people to follow this nine point charter of instructions.

1. Public should avoid going out of their houses unless it is absolutely necessary.

2. Those who are above 60 years of age should not step out of their houses.

3. People should voluntarily observe the Janata Curfew from 7 am to 9 pm on 22.03.2020.

4. To applaud the services of doctors, nurses, Para-medical staff, Army, Airport and other Department staff, who are involved in Corona prevention activities, people are requested to clap their hands or ring bells at 5 pm on 22.03.2020.

5. People are requested to avoid going to hospitals for normal and usual medical treatment. If Operation Date has been fixed, patients are advised to try to postpone the operation as far as possible.

6. To mitigate the impact on the economy, the Hon'ble Union Finance Minister has set up a Special Committee for Economic revival.

7. Salaries of house maids, drivers, garden workers and other house staff should not be stopped.

8. Try to avoid panic buying of things.

9. Lastly, don't believe rumours.

As per the Hon'ble Prime Minister's instructions, transport corporation buses, private buses and taxies will not run between 7 am to 9 pm on 22.03.2020. Similarly Metro Services will not be available on that date. At 5 pm on that day, as instructed by the Hon'ble Prime Minister, people should thank the staff who function with dedication to prevent the Corona Virus from spreading.

All the Government and private libraries in the State will be closed till 31.03.2020. I humbly appeal to the people, as per the instructions of the Hon'ble Prime Minister, to fully support the measures taken by the Hon'ble Amma's Government in successfully arresting the spread of Corona Virus in the State.

Proactive steps to prevent lockdown stress among daily wage earners

Hon'ble Chief Minister announces measures on war footing against Corona Virus

Relief measures announced by the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, **Thiru. Edappadi K.Palaniswami**, in the Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly on 24.03.2020 under Rule 110. *(English Translation)*

Hon'ble Speaker Sir,

Hon'ble Amma's Government has been taking serious protection measures on a war-footing to prevent Corona Virus infections in the State.

Yesterday (23.03.2020) I made a number of announcements to intensify 'social distancing' in the State. Based on that, a detailed statement was issued in the evening. To implement the order, Section 144 of the Cr.P.C Act is to be issued by the Police Commissioner in Chennai and by the District Collectors in the Districts. These Prohibitory Orders will come into effect from 6 pm this evening (24.03.2020).

Due to this, the livelihood of daily wage earners, agriculture workers, auto and taxi drivers, construction workers and unorganized workers will be severely affected. Realizing the ordeal of poor people, Hon'ble Amma's Government has decided to provide relief to these people and I have issued orders for the release of the following special relief measures, worth Rs. 3,280 crore, to them.

All rice cardholders will be given Rs. 1,000 as relief. Their ration for the month of April namely Rice, oil, dhal and sugar will be given at no cost. To avoid the rush of beneficiaries, the relief will be given through token system on an allotted date and time for each and every beneficiary. Those who do not want the cost free materials and Rs.1,000 can register their names in the portal concerned or through the App.

Ration cardholders who did not get their March ration can get the same along with their April Ration.

Construction workers and auto drivers who are members of the Workers Welfare Board will be given a special hamper of Rs. 1,000 and 15 kg of rice, 1 kg of dhal and 1 kg of cooking oil.

Migrant construction labourers and unorganized workers of other States who are stranded in Tamil Nadu will be identified by the District Collectors and Workers Welfare Board and each of the families will be given 15 kg of rice, 1 kg of dhal and 1 kg of cooking oil at no cost.

Amma Canteens will continue to supply hot, hygienic food.

People who do not have any support and indigent people, will be given hot and hygienic food at their doorstep itself.

To prepare the food, I have directed the Chennai Corporation Commissioners and District Collectors to set up community kitchens.

Steps will be taken by the District Collectors to supply food to elderly persons who are taking food in Anganwadi Centres, at their place of residence.

Registered platform vendors will be given an additional Rs.1,000 as relief along with the Rs.1,000 being given through the Public Distribution System.

Those coming under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme in the current month will be given two days additional wages.

NEWS IN PICTURE

Meeting with Hon'ble Tamil Nadu Governor

Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu **Thiru. Edappadi K. Palaniswami** called on Hon'ble Governor of Tamil Nadu **Thiru. Banwarilal Purohit** at Raj Bhavan on 31.03.2020 and explained to him the series of steps being taken by various Departments of the Tamil Nadu Government to ensure that the Corona Virus infections did not spread.

Hon'ble Chief Minister writes to Hon'ble Prime Minister seeking speedy grant of Rs.4,000 crore

Text of the D.O. letter dated 25.03.2020 of **Thiru. Edappadi K. Palaniswami,** Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu addressed to **Shri. Narendra Modi,** Hon'ble Prime Minister of India

"I commend and congratulate you on the bold and decisive measures that you have taken in order to combat the COVID-19 pandemic and to protect India and all Indians from the deadly virus. Tamil Nadu had already announced and implemented a lockdown with effect from 6 pm on 24th March, 2020 and the State Government and its machinery has been fully geared to implement the lockdown effectively, while ensuring availability of essential requirements and services. The Government of Tamil Nadu is determined to stand firm with the Government of India to protect the country from the consequences of this virus pandemic.

I also thank you for having announced a special allocation of Rs.15,000 crore to strengthen health infrastructure including creation of isolation facilities, provision of ventilators and personal protective equipment (PPE) to combat the pandemic. I had already announced a package measures to strengthen the health infrastructure in Tamil Nadu. Tamil Nadu has earmarked 10,000 beds in isolation wards both in Government and Private hospitals to treat COVID-19 patients throughout the state. We have scaled up procurement of requisite medical equipment including ventilators, hospital beds and PPE, drugs and medicines and deployment of health human resources. Tamil Nadu is vulnerable to this virus, because of the large number of international passengers who transit through the four international airports and four major ports in the State and as it also adjoins States where the outbreak has been initially more severe. Hence, while immediate measures have been taken, we will need to prepare for a significantly higher case load in the coming weeks and months. Substantially more resources are needed to face the projected number of cases effectively, including through the establishment of isolation hospitals, quarantine centres, supply of hospital equipment including hospital beds, ventilators and PPE, medicines and testing kits and disinfection equipment and chemicals. Further, private hospitals also would need to be equipped and their services utilized to treat patients free

of cost. Extensive sanitation and disinfection measures would need to be undertaken. Hence I request an allotment of Rs.3,000 crore for the augmentation and strengthening of the health infrastructure and for essential equipment, medicines and for preventive public health measures at this crucial juncture.

Further, the lockdown for 21 days will add to the huge strain that the economy of the State has already been put under. I announced an immediate relief package of Rs.3,280 crore for the State including supply of free ration commodities for the month of April and Rs.1,000 per family for loss of wages, in the aftermath of the proposed lockdown till March 31, 2020. Now that the lockdown will be extended by two more weeks, the impact on the poorest and daily wage workers will be the most as they face an immediate loss of livelihood and have very limited savings to face the adversity. Further, many businesses, especially the MSMEs are also facing a very difficult situation and would face collapse without adequate and timely support. Hence, we eagerly await the announcement of the economic and financial relief package. In this context, I would like to place before you the following specific relief measures for Tamil Nadu:

1. Workers dependent on MGNREGA wages have been put to considerable hardship. Our monthly MGNREGA wage bill in Tamil Nadu is Rs.400 crore. Although some types of small works have been permitted, it is expected that at least 50 per cent of the wage employment would be last. To relieve their hardship I request that at least Rs.500 crore be released as a special allocation to pay 50 per cent wages for the wage employment lost in the months of March, April and May, 2020.

2. On the unorganized labour front we have approximately 12 lakh construction workers and 15 lakh workers in the other unorganized sector, who would be facing undue hardship during this lockdown period. I have announced a special package of Rs.1,000 along with 15 kg of rice, and 1 kg each of dhall and oil supplied free of cost. However, we would need more support for the wage loss which is now likely for a longer period of at least two more weeks. I request you to allot a sum of Rs.500 crore to provide a special wage loss and relief package for unorganized sector workers in the State to help them overcome their immediate hardships.

3. Supply of PDS commodities to the members of the public in general also needs to be continued for two more months at least. Hence, we request that the stocks of food grains available with FCI are released to the States and to Tamil Nadu at the BPL rates for the entire allotment of the States to enable us to supply food and essential articles to all ration card holders in the State during this distress period.

4. In addition, a large number of industries and businesses, especially MSMEs face considerable loss of production and of markets. Cash flows are heavily constrained making it very difficult for them to meet their tax, statutory dues payment and bank loan interest payment and loan repayment obligations. Hence, I request that as a special measure, bank loan repayments can be rescheduled at least for two quarters, without treating them as

NPAs. Interest and penalties can be waived for the two quarters. The working capital loans to all industries and businesses can be enhanced by 50 per cent without seeking any additional collateral from the enterprises.

5. In this unprecedented situation, Government's revenues have also taken a hit and the expenditure needs have risen considerably. Hence, as a one-time measure, I request that the fiscal deficit limits of 3 per cent of GSDP may be relaxed for the financial years 2019-2020 and 2020-2021. Further, additional borrowing of 33 per cent above the level permitted for the fiscal year 2019-2020 may be allowed for 2020-2021 to enable the States to meet the additional expenditure requirements.

Keeping in view the urgency of the tasks on hand to meet the challenges of tackling the COVID - 19 pandemic and to support the Government of Tamil Nadu financially, as it takes massive preventive operations and relieve the considerable hardship placed on the poor, I request you urgently consider my request for special assistance of Rs.4,000 crore and related financial relief measures expeditiously."

NEWS IN PICTURE

Hon'ble Chief Minister inspects working of 24 hours control room!

Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu **Thiru. Edappadi K. Palaniswami**, on 27.03.2020 at the DMS Complex at Teynampet in Chennai, reviewed the working of the 24 hours control room set up for taking measures to curb the spread of the Corona Virus infection and spoke to the doctors working there.

Combating COVID-19 and its aftermath

Hon'ble Chief Minister urges aggregate amount of Rs.1 lakh crore for States

Text of the D.O. letter dated 28.03.2020 of **Thiru. Edappadi K. Palaniswami,** Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, addressed to **Shri. Narendra Modi,** Hon'ble Prime Minister of India

"The Government of Tamil Nadu has continued to enforce the strict nationwide lockdown to prevent the rapid spread of the COVID -19 virus. Effective measures to screen, quarantine and isolate where needed, all those with travel history to COVID-19 hot spots, and to complete the contact tracing chains are being taken to contain the social spread. Essential supplies are being maintained to mitigate the hardship to the common people. I thank you for the slew of relief measures announced as part of the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana. The package of liquidity and interest rate reduction measures announced by the Reserve Bank of India would also be of great help to the economy.

As you are aware the main responsibility to ensure that the lock down is strictly enforced and in parallel also ensure the welfare of the poor and the vulnerable, falls on the State Governments. Many State Governments including Tamil Nadu have announced relief packages, which have been supplemented and supported by the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana package. I believe that, further relief measures would also be required in the days to come. Substantial expenditure would also be required to ramp up the availability of health infrastructure and medical supplies. Eventually, measures would also have to be taken to revive economic growth, assist various sectors to return to their growth trajectory and to stimulate consumption and investment demand.

All Governments will suffer substantial reductions in tax and revenue receipts and it would not be possible to step up revenue raising

for a while. However, the expenditure needs and responsibilities will not wait.

It is in that context, that I had specifically requested you in my letter dated 25th March, 2020 that as a one-time measure, the fiscal deficit limits of 3 per cent of GSDP may be relaxed for the financial years 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 and additional borrowing of 33 per cent above the level permitted for the fiscal year 2019-2020 may be allowed for 2020-2021, to enable the States to meet the additional expenditure requirements. While this will certainly help the States to immediately incur expenditure, States naturally have a limitation on how much they can borrow in the markets and will be crippled by massive repayment obligations if they borrow too much. But the onus on reviving the economy by fueling consumption and investment falls on the Governments at this time.

Under the Indian Public Finance System, only the Government of India can in an eventuality, borrow freely from the monetary authority, the Reserve Bank of India. The economic impact of the lockdown is likely to be very severe and unprecedented. Such difficult times call for unconventional measures to ensure that the economy is revived and re-invigorated. Conventional economic doctrines and dogmas will need to be set aside temporarily. Hence, I request that the Government of India, in addition to permitting the additional borrowing by State Governments, should provide an aggregate amount of at least Rs.1 lakh crore as a special grant to the State Governments to combat the COVID - 19 virus and its aftermath. This needs to be in addition to the other forms of financial transfers to the States envisaged in the Union Budget and can be financed by the Government of India borrowing from the Reserve Bank of India. The funds can be distributed in proportion of the size of each State's GSDP to the national GDP, since the expenditure out of this grant will also pump prime the economy and lead to its revival.

I request that Tamil Nadu may be given a grant of Rs.9,000 crore under this special dispension.

In these very difficult and challenging times, as a Prime Minister who has not shied away from taking bold, difficult and unconventional decisions in the interest of the nation, I am confident you would consider this special request and take necessary appropriate action."

Accomodation, food, medical facilities provided to migrant labourers

Hon'ble Chief Minister makes impassioned plea to people to observe lockdown by staying indoors

Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu **Thiru. Edappadi K. Palaniswami's** press meet on 03.04.2020 after visiting the camp at Guru Nanak College, Chennai where migrants from other States who could not return to their native places on account of the National lockdown order, were lodged. *(English Translation)*

My regards to all media friends.

The dangerous Corona Virus that has immobilized the world today, has spread to many States in India also. Many persons have been affected in Tamil Nadu also and they are getting treated. In this situation, Hon'ble Amma's Government, in the interest of migrant workers, has provided them place to stay, food and medical facilities. Our Government is arranging the necessary facilities for migrants who had come to Tamil Nadu for work from States like Odisha, West Bengal, Assam, Jharkhand and Uttar Pradesh.

Today, we met the migrants staying in three camps and I directly got the feedback from them on the types of assistance they are getting from the Government. Media and newspaper friends have also come here. Hon'ble Prime Minister has advised that States that have labourers from other States should extend all assistance to them. In deference to that advice, Hon'ble Amma's Government has provided the

necessary accommodation as well as food and medical facilities to the migrant labourers in Tamil Nadu.

Question: Regarding your interaction with the Hon'ble Prime Minister in the video conference…..

Answer: All TV channels and newspapers have reported it. The Central Government has stated it will examine our demands.

As of today, the number of migrant labourers working in factories in Tamil Nadu is 1,18,336, in shops and commercial establishments 3,409, in eateries 7,871 and in agricultural farms 4,953. Totally, 1,34,569 persons from other States are working in Tamil Nadu in different sectors.

Likewise, the number of persons from Tamil Nadu working in other States is 7,198. On our request to Chief Ministers of States where Tamils are working, I wish to mention that they are also extending the necessary assistance to persons who have gone there for work.

Question: In the absence of public transport, the price of essential commodities has shot up. About permitting vehicles..?

Answer: There is no ban on the movement of essential commodities. This has been made clear through media and newspapers. We depend on other States for the supplies of groceries. Many States have imposed different restrictions. Also, lorries which move the essential commodities across the country are not operated in a big way. That is why this pressure. Hon'ble Prime Minister of India has advised States not to ban the movement of essential commodities. Based on this, the situation will be rectified.

Question: When the lockdown is in operation, people are coming out of their houses in good number for purchase of essential commodities. Will Government take necessary steps in this regard?

Answer: The reason for imposing the lockdown is for people to observe social distancing. Corona Virus is a dangerous infection. All the TV channels are daily showing how this virus has spread in different countries; people also are seeing it. But some people, without understanding the virulence of this infection, are playfully spending their time outside in two and four wheelers. What the Government beseeches through media and newspapers is that people should realize the impact of this disease. Doctors say there is no cure when one is afflicted with this disease. To control this pandemic, stop its spread, people should co-operate fully with the steps taken by the Government. This is what we emphasize. Media and newspapers explain it clearly. Still, some people ignore this. Today the Central Home Ministry has strongly urged severe action against those who defy the ban

order issued under Sec.144. We have been patient. All should follow this regulation. Ban order under Sec.144 is not to inflict sufferings on people or to ban essential services. This is a law for the safety of all. Keeping this in mind, people should give their co-operation to the Government fully. For Government, each family is important. Government has the duty to protect every human life. That is why we continue to urge this. The Departments of Health, Police, Revenue and local bodies are telling people through public address system in different places about the impact of this disease. The aim of all Departments is prevention of this disease. For that people should co-operate. We are creating this awareness continuously. So, I affectionately request the people of Tamil Nadu to isolate themselves in their homes for preventing the spread of this virus further.

Question: The price of essential commodities has gone up because of the absence of public transport system…

Answer: You yourself say that essential commodities are not available; that lorry traffic should be restored. If it is done, loading and unloading of commodities should be permitted; drivers should be allowed; people should be allowed to purchase essential commodities. It is Government's duty to meet all these needs of the people. People should make use of it in a proper way. They should not go to shops daily for purchase of essential commodities. If they purchase their needs for a week – groceries and vegetables – and store them, there is no need for a going out daily. But it is the people who should adopt this practice. As far as Government is concerned, we continue to emphasize it through newspapers. You are also doing it. Adopting it is people's duty. Some people don't listen though we cry ourselves hoarse. But, hereafter the Law will take its course. Government has co-operated with the people to the extent possible. If people fail to use that co-operation in a proper way, I wish to inform through the media and newspapers, that there is no alternative to the Government except making the ban under Sec.144 more stringent.

Each State adopts its own methods. The condition in our State is different. That of others is quite different. Chief Ministers will take steps that are suitable to their States. Our Government is taking measures suitable to our State.

Question: Commodities in our ration shops are issued continuously. People of our State are in neighbouring States. Will steps be taken to issue ration articles to them?

Answer: We are already in contact with the Chief Ministers and officials of States where workers from Tamil Nadu have gone and are working, for getting them the needed assistance. A committee has been set up for this exclusively. The committee is headed by the Secretary of the Department and he is in constant

touch with those officials. We are getting them necessary assistance if they are affected in the States of their migration by holding talks with the Governments of those States. We have also announced that the amount disbursed by them towards assistance to our workers there, will be compensated by us.

Likewise, we distribute 15 kg rice, 1 kg dhal and 1 kg cooking oil to workers from other States, working in industries in Tamil Nadu.

Question: Is Tamil Nadu in the second stage of Corona attack? Till now, 309 persons have been affected. Has it turned into a community spread? Three employees of (a store in) the Phoenix Mall have been affected. The source from where they contracted the virus is not yet known conclusively.

Answer: Government is in the task of finding it out. It is taking all steps to prevent the spread of the virus.

Question: A cut on a percentage basis in the salary of Government servants has been effected in the neighbouring States of Telangana and Maharashtra. Has the Tamil Nadu Government any proposal like that?

Answer: As far as Tamil Nadu is concerned, most of the industries are not functioning. Only a few are working. Mostly, big establishments also are not functioning. Already they have closed down due to the ban under Sec.144. Cinema theatres have closed down. So, the Government revenue and GST has been severely affected. Still, I wish to inform, no salary cut will be effected for Government employees as of now.

Question: Grocery articles are hoarded and sold at higher prices at many places. Will Government proceed against such traders?

Answer: Already our higher officials have discussed this with the heads of merchants' associations and have asked them to take action against those who sell goods at higher prices. The President of the association has issued a statement in newspapers regarding this. He has stated that action will be taken against erring traders. Let us wait and see.

Question: Your request for central funds. Has any allotment been made?

Answer: Only yesterday we asked for funds. I hope the Central Government will examine our request and take action on it.

Question: Is the Government taking steps to help the differently-abled pavement dwellers, the mentally retarded and the homeless?

Answer: There are no differently-abled pavement dwellers. I wish to state that already officials of the Departments of Police and local bodies are bringing and accommodating roadside dwellers and extending assistance to them.

I wish to mention at this time that cases have been registered against 45,046 persons who defied the ban order under Sec.144 and were in the streets without valid reason; 50,393 persons were arrested and let on bail; 37,760 vehicles were seized; 92 cases were registered and 95 persons were arrested for spreading rumours about Corona Virus infection.

Question: Any possibility of postponing the 10th standard public examination?

Answer: The Central Government has already promulgated lockdown till April 14. Let us wait and see.

Question: Will special wages be given to the staff of Amma restaurants?

Answer: They are attending to their normal duties. Their work is to prepare food and serve it to those visiting the restaurant. They have to prepare food daily and serve it to the poor at cheap rates. They are following that order.

Question: Will the distribution of Rs.1,000 through ration shops be made available to all? Some persons are in other States, other Districts. Will arrangements be made to include them also?

Answer: I have already announced that all food articles supplied in ration shops will be distributed at no cost. Accordingly, we have been supplying from yesterday rice, sugar, dhal and oil at no cost. If any person has gone out of town or has not obtained it, he or she can get it before the end of this month.

Also, we have advised that the payment of Rs.1,000 should hereafter be made along with the distribution of token. Following reports in the media and newspapers that crowds collect at different places (for the collection of tokens), tokens are to be distributed at their door-step. Along with the token, the Government announced Rs.1,000 will also be distributed.

To create awareness about Corona Virus, newspaper and media friends are daily conveying to people through their newspapers and TV channels, news about how the virus spreads, how to prevent it from spreading, what are the steps the Government is taking and how the general public should follow them and the like. I wish to inform that you, too, will be given Rs.3,000 as a special gesture by this Government. You are moving about in vehicles incurring expenditure on it and on food. This is a very critical period. This Government wishes to help you in this period. Hence, we will distribute Rs.3,000 to accredited correspondents in newspaper establishments and media. With this I take leave of you.

Nandri! Vanakkam.

Hon'ble Chief Minister answers journalists' queries after reviewing anti-Corona measures with District Collectors

Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu **Thiru. Edappadi K. Palaniswami's** Press Meet after reviewing with all District Collectors through video conferencing at the Secretariat on 06.04.2020, the serial safety measures taken by the different Departments for preventing the spread of Corona Virus in Tamil Nadu. *(English Translation)*

The Corona virus that is shaking the world today is spreading fast. The virulence of this disease is increasing gradually in India also. As far as Tamil Nadu is concerned, the Government is engaged with all its vigour in taking preventive measures. Today, a consultation meeting took place with all District Collectors. On behalf of the Government, the District Collectors were briefed on the steps to be undertaken to control and halt further spreading of the Corona Virus infection. Accordingly, they will involve themselves in the virus preventive works and will continue to take precautionary measures to stop its spread.

In Tamil Nadu, the number of persons tested at airports is 2,10,538; of them 90,541 are in self quarantine in their homes; of these persons, 10,841 have completed 28 days of isolation. The number of Corona testing laboratories in Tamil Nadu is 17 - 11 with the Government and 6 in private sector. We have urged the Centre to permit the setting up of such laboratories in 21 more places. We hope permission will be granted. The medical equipment needed for them has arrived. When the situation improves for the operation of 38 laboratories after getting permission from the Centre for the 21, the rate of testing will increase fast. Till now, the number of persons tested in laboratories is 4,612. Of

these persons, 571 have tested positive for Corona virus infection till date. The number of persons admitted as in-patients in isolation wards on suspicion of Corona attack, is 1,848.

As far as hospitals are concerned, we have, as of today, 22,049 beds ready – enough to meet our needs to treat patients; 3,371 ventilators are available with Government and private hospitals; there is enough stock of face masks, personal protective equipment (PPE) and N-95 masks; 2 lakh face masks and 20,000 personal protection equipment are additionally received on a daily basis; as more ventilators are needed, orders to procure 2,500 ventilators have been issued today. There is enough stock of medicines for treating Corona Virus infection and fever and enough antibiotics and I.V. fluids. I wish to state here that orders have been issued for procurement of one lakh rapid test kits. As soon as they are available, one lakh persons can be tested speedily. The duration of that test is just 30 minutes. On the coming 9th, we will get the rapid test kits for expediting the tests. We are procuring them from China. On their receipt on the 9th, they will be dispatched to all Districts on 10th itself for taking up the tests speedily.

As for essential commodities, the Government is taking all steps to make them available continuously. As for migrant labour, all facilities – accommodation, food and medical – are being provided to them in all Districts, as per information received by us. I too met at Chennai, the migrant labourers from the States like Odisha, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Jharkhand, and after a personal inspection, we are extending the assistance needed by them. Likewise, we are in touch with Chief Ministers of different States where Tamils have gone to work and those States are also giving needed assistance to Tamil workers.

The number of workers from Tamil Nadu staying in camps in other States, is 7,326. Our Government has arranged for their facilities. The number of camps in Tamil Nadu for migrant labour from other States, is 268. The number of persons staying in these camps, is 11,530. We are providing them at no cost 15 kg of rice, 1 kg dhal and 1 kg cooking oil. The total number of labourers in the unorganized sector in the State is 83,500. Cash relief has been given to 13,037 persons till 05.04.2020. For the remaining persons, cash relief is being given. All the disbursals are through bank accounts.

The Government is taking urgent steps to distribute essential commodities to all persons.

As regards actions taken by the Police Department, cases have been registered against 94,873 persons for defying the ban promulgated under Sec.144; in these cases, 94,158 persons were arrested and released on bail; the number of vehicles seized in this is 72,242;

fines collected for defying the lockdown is Rs.25.14 lakh.

Question: You had already asked the Central Government for a fund of Rs.3,000 crore; then, you asked for Rs.9,000 crore; at the latest instance of video conferencing with the Prime Minister of India, you asked for an allotment of Rs.3,000 crore for purchase of PPE (personal preventive equipment), medical equipment and the like. Has the Central Government given any assurance for fund release?

Answer: As a first phase, Rs.500 crore has been given to SDRF (State Disaster Relief Fund). They have stated that funds will be given gradually.

Question: Has Tamil Nadu Government enough funds to procure articles like PPE from China?

Answer: We have sufficient funds for such purposes. We have been drawing from the funds already given to SDRF. Still, in the interests of the general public, the Government is taking all steps for preventing this virus infection totally on a priority basis by mobilizing the needed funds. Enough funds have been allotted.

Question: Today is the 13th day of lockdown. The impact of the virus infection is increasing. Has the Tamil Nadu Government any plans to prolong the period of lockdown?

Answer: As you have said, the impact of this virus infection is increasing. We are witnessing it. If we isolate ourselves, this disease will not spread. If we fail to do it, certainly this disease will spread further and further. The only solution is isolation. Everyone should co-operate to prevent the spread of this disease. Only such co-operation will prevent its spread. I have stated through the media and newspapers that this is an infectious disease. It can spread easily. You, media and newspaper friends, are educating the people through newspapers and TV channels how this disease spreads. I thank you for that. Still, people should be vigilant. As soon as the symptoms of the disease become visible, one should get admitted to hospital and take the appropriate treatment. If this is done, one can get cured. In Tamil Nadu, seven persons were cured and went back home. But now the disease occurs without showing the symptoms. These are the findings from recent tests. Asymptomatic positive cases have come about. This should make each one of us realize how cautious we should be. We should co-operate with the Government in all its actions. I said social distancing should be adopted. Most of the people don't observe it. We have clearly explained through newspapers and the media how this disease

spreads. That too is not followed. If all these things are followed, the spread of this disease can certainly be prevented.

Question: You say the ban order is not being followed; to make it severe, what steps has the Government taken?

Answer: You tell us how to should go about. If we do take steps, there is a lot of fault-finding from your side. Government should not inflict any hardship on the people; nor should the people be subjected to any annoyance. But at the same time the spread of the disease should be prevented. If the Government issues an order, it has taken that step in the interests of the people. All should understand this. It is impossible to execute this law by inflicting difficulties and sufferings on the people. If everyone carries out the Government order, realizing one's duty as well as the nature, virulence and impact of the disease, it can certainly be prevented. We can enact laws; but to execute them, people's co-operation is needed.

Question: Door delivery of articles can prevent people coming out of their houses?

Answer: This pandemic has come about all on a sudden. We need that number of persons (to deliver). If we had been prepared, we could have given it to all immediately. We do what is possible. If you see, as of date, 90,541 persons are quarantined in their houses. We have directed door delivery of essential articles like vegetables, milk and grocery goods to them also. It is very difficult to embark on door delivery to all. Still, Government has given good suggestions to District Collectors. To the extent possible, deliver necessary essential articles at people's doorsteps; distribute vegetables. They have been instructed to arrange sale of vegetables through mobile shops on behalf of the Government. At many places, vegetables are supplied through mobile vegetable shops. We have told the Commissioner to arrange such supply in Chennai also. They have also agreed to it. People's movement should be reduced gradually and to that end, Government is taking measured steps.

Question: At the Delhi conference, 1,246 persons had participated and of them 522 had tested positive. Have tests been conducted for the remaining 750 persons? What is their status?

Answer: Your figures are not correct. Your estimate is tentative. Who is to offer this data? How to find it out? Data given by people is being circulated. We also say the same thing. The Department also says the same thing. So, on the basis of the information we got about the attendees of that conference, we have tested them all and those who tested positive have been admitted to hospitals and are being treated. I have said, the Health Secretary and the Chief

Secretary have said that if any of the attendees are left out or still have not undergone the medical test, let them come forward voluntarily and get tested. Many came forwarded and tested themselves. Many have tested negative. Some have tested positive. Disease is a natural occurrence. It does not forewarn. Nobody invites a disease. But if one gets afflicted with a disease, it is Government's duty to cure the person as every life is precious. If the afflicted person gets well, he can protect his family. If he hides the disease, other members of his family also will get infected when he associates with them. Not only that; wherever he goes, the infection will spread. Then, it cannot be controlled at all. Those with symptoms and those who have visited foreign countries or attended other conferences, it is good for them, their families and the country for them to get tested voluntarily and find out whether they have been infected.

Question: You had announced an incentive of Rs.3,000 to journalists and I thank you on behalf of journalists. In Tamil Nadu, we have been providing all necessary facilities to migrant labourers. Even today, there is information that 40 Tamils are starving in Gujarat. What sort of an action does the Government propose to take to help them?

Answer: I have already made it clear. We get in touch with the Governments of States where Tamils have gone to work and necessary facilities are provided to them. On the basis of information we receive, we get in touch at the official level and have arranged accommodation, food and medical assistance for them. We have set up 12 committees for that. Each committee has many IAS officers and is headed by the Secretary of the Department concerned. Immediately on receipt of any information, these committees get in touch with the State concerned and arrange necessary facilities for Tamils. On the basis of information got from many States like Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh, the Tamil Nadu Government continues to help them. If you forward your information, the Tamil Nadu Government will help Tamils and workers from Tamil Nadu residing in Gujarat.

Not only that; many workers in the un-organized sector have sought assistance. They have asked for the various concessions already announced by us for workers in the construction and auto industries. So, the Rs.1,000 assistance will be given to members of the left-out Welfare Boards – hair dressers, washermen, palm tree workers, handicraft artisans, handloom and handloom silk weaving workers, footwear, leather product manufacturing and leather processing workers, painters, goldsmiths, pottery workers, domestic servants, power loom weavers, cooks and village artisans.

Question: Any decision regarding the 10th standard public examination?

Answer: Many issues are still there. Already there is a 21-day lockdown. Only after its expiry and after understanding the nature of this disease, a suitable date can be announced.

Question: There is a ban on any assembly of people under Sec.144. But many private schools are sending SMS to parents to pay the tuition fees for the next academic year.

Answer: If you give information on that, appropriate action will be taken against them.

Question: There are many who have not registered themselves with welfare boards.

Answer: How can we take a census of un-registered persons? Government cannot do that. This cash assistance is for the members of the Board, set up as per Government laws and rules.

Question: About the public demand for cash assistance to sugar card holders….

Answer: Originally, the number of sugar cards in Tamil Nadu was 10 lakh. Many card holders requested us to change their family cards into rice family cards. We made an announcement that those desirous of changing their sugar card into rice card can do so. Accordingly, 4.51 lakh sugar card holders opted to become rice family card holders. The remaining 5.49 lakh sugar card holders did not go for the change. We have already made it clear that only rice family card holders are eligible for Government assistance. We stick to that. Some of the sugar card holders who did not get the change made within the stipulated period, asked for more time. We gave it; then we extended that time limit also. Even after these extensions, they failed to change their family cards. Government can't do anything for that. Still we are giving them sugar, dhal and oil at no cost.

Question: We are able to see police implementing the ban under Sec.144 in main roads. There is a feeling that supervision in interior streets is less. People's movement there is high.

Answer: If it is one or two days, our police officers would have brought it totally under control. It is 21 days. Now it is severe summer. We should see the difficulties of the Police Department. We should all share the difficulties. This is a testing time. All should participate in this testing time. We should not blame the Police Department alone. In these hot days, they are functioning on national highways, state roads, roads demarking District boundaries and inter-state boundaries. We are working with the available police force. They are working on shifts. Each one of them stands for 8 hours in the hot sun. We have to ponder all these things. People should have self-discipline. Then only we can implement whatever law we enact. Police Department is no doubt a protection - as fence is for the crop, police is for the people. If it (lockdown) is for one or two days, it can be brought under total control with more police constables, as you mention. If it is continuously for 21 days – they too are human beings; we should think about them with empathy. If people contemplate the difficulties of constables who protect us, and stay in their houses, it will be good for them, for the family, for their home and the country.

What I urge again and again, is that if this disease spreads it cannot be prevented. We should well realize the lesson obtained in very big countries like the United States, Italy, China, Germany and Spain. There is no medicine for this disease still. With the available medical treatment, we are saving lives. So, understanding the virulence and impact of the disease, people should remain disciplined; remain in their homes. Through

the media and newspapers, I wish to say that Amma's Government will arrange all the required facilities for you.

Question: People appreciate the excellent measures of the Government. But there is the complaint that the cash assistance of Rs. 1,000 is not enough….

Answer: This is an emergency. You know well the Government's financial position. Government's revenues have all dwindled. G.S.T. gives us revenue; tax revenue is through sales. All industries and big establishments have closed down. Still, the Government has shared the available funds and provided the necessary facilities.

Question: As people are tied down to their homes for 21 days, electricity consumption has increased. Will any concessions in electricity charges be given?

Answer: The Electricity Board is already under a debt burden. It is the Electricity Board and the Transport Department that are under severe debt burden. Every month, the Electricity Board is incurring a loss of Rs.1,300 crore; in a year, it incurs loss of about Rs.16,000 crore. We should take this into account.

Question: Among the Delhi conference attendees who have contracted Corona Virus infection, how many persons in their families and those who travelled with them and associated with them have you tested?

Answer: We continue the exercise of testing. We cannot reveal the figures. Information is being gathered at all places. At many places affected people have been quarantined. In Chennai, the quarantine is at 37 places. In every District, wherever positive cases and persons with symptoms are found, they have all been quarantined. No one can enter those areas or exit them. Among the inmates there, those who attended the conference are tested in the first phase. Whoever tests positive, their family members are tested. Then, residents in that street are tested. Then, persons in the next street are tested and in this way, all those residing in a 5 km radius are tested. Then only, we can have a full idea of the spread of the disease. Apart from this, Government has started collecting information about the places where the infected person travelled and whom he met for testing them also. People's co-operation is needed. The spread of this disease can be prevented only if all people extend their co-operation. As it is an infectious disease, it has spread to many. It is said persons like British Prince Charles and the British Prime Minister have been affected. Members of Royal family get it. For ordinary persons here, there is every possibility of getting infected in some form. If the disease strikes, one should not be afraid of it. It is natural to fall ill. No one can stop it. If that happens, one should undergo the necessary treatment to get cured. That is what we go on emphasizing. This is an infectious disease; it spreads easily. So, we affectionately request the general public to co-operate with the Government in its actions and extend full co-operation to prevent the spread of this disease. We want you to observe social distancing; we want you to remain at home; essential articles you need, will come to your house. Hence, we again affectionately request people not to come out of their homes on any account.

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Clarification on demand for Melarasampattu dam

Reply of the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu **Thiru. Edappadi K.Palaniswami** in the Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly on 21.02.2020, to the Hon'ble DMK MLA, Thiru. A.P.Nandakumar regarding construction of Melarasampattu Dam in his Anaicut constituency. *(English Translation)*

Hon'ble Speaker Sir,

Even according to you the land takeover issue has been there for about 15 years. So work can be started only after taking over the required land. If the issue has been there for 15 years, then your Government was also involved in the land acquisition issue. Only if the takeover of the land is completed, the work can be taken up. You can't take over the land from the farmers as and when you like. We have been talking to the farmers to convince them. Only after convincing them about the need for the takeover, the land can be acquired. After getting the permission letter from them, the dam can be constructed as you envisage, water stored, and the required water provided to farmers. Through this, the farmers can improve their yields and livelihood. I would like to inform the Hon'ble Member that this is how our Government wants to help farmers.

Hon'ble Speaker Sir,

Thanks to the steps taken by Hon'ble Amma's Government, the rate of death of mothers (Maternal mortality) during delivery has been reduced. Similarly the death of children during delivery (Child mortality) has also been reduced. I would like to inform the Hon'ble Member that the Government has already achieved the target set for the year 2030.

Hon'ble Chief Minister clarifies on issues raised by Members

Explanation by the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu **Thiru. Edappadi K.Palaniswami** in the Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly on 11.03.20202, regarding bridge works, removal of encroachments in tanks, crop damage due to attack by forest pigs and new medical college at the Nilgiris. *(English Translation)*

Hon'ble Speaker Sir,

Hon'ble Opposition Member charged that the bridge works, which were started during their regime are still pending. I would like to inform him through you, Sir, that the bridge works have been pending mainly due to dispute in taking over the land for the bridge. You know well that acquisition of land for public purpose is a major issue. It is not possible to take over the land from the owner as and when we like. So if the first phase of the bridge works had been started after taking over the land, there would have been no hitch. But during your rule, you started the first phase of the bridge works without taking over the land, which resulted in the extreme delay in completing the bridge works. But the present Government is now taking the necessary steps to complete the bridge work.

Similarly, they spoke about encroachment in tanks. It will take some time to remove the encroachments in tanks. The 'encroachers' go to court immediately. If they go to courts, then we will have to wait till the completion of the court case. I would like to inform that the delay is mainly due to this only. I would like to inform the Member through the Chair that the Government will take the necessary steps after completing all these formalities.

In forest areas, damage of crops by forest pigs is a recurring phenomenon. The farmers in forest areas are the worst affected by this damage. The Hon'ble Minister for Forest has instructed his Department officials in those areas to take the necessary steps to protect the crops from forest animals. The Government has also instructed the Forest Department officials to take the necessary steps to restrain the forest pigs when complaints are received from farmers on this score. I would like to inform the Member through you, Sir, that if the crops are damaged by forest pigs, the Government will take the necessary steps to give sufficient compensation after assessing the loss.

People from the Nilgiris District have been demanding a medical college in their District for a long time. Based on their demand, the State Government has taken steps to set up a medical

college in the District and announced the same after getting permission from the Central Government. It would have been appropriate if the Member had asked whether a medical college was necessary or not for the Nilgiris District. At present the situation is that people in the District have to come down from the Hills. So the Revenue Department officials inspected various places. At the place mentioned by the Member, there were trees. We have sought the permission from the Central Government to remove the trees. Once the permission is received, then we will start constructing buildings. Normal procedure is that 10 trees should be planted if one tree is removed. Based on that condition only, land will be taken over. I would like to inform the Member through you, Sir, that the entire scheme is for the welfare of the people.

NEWS IN PICTURE

REVIEW MEETING ON PREVENTIVE MEASURES AGAINST CORONA VIRUS

Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu **Thiru. Edappadi K. Palaniswami** presided over a meeting at his camp office on 27.03.2020, to review the series of steps being taken by various Departments of the Tamil Nadu Government to ensure that the Corona Virus infections did not spread.

'Delta Districts will never see new hydrocarbon projects'

Hon'ble Chief Minister raps DMK for creating doubts on Protected Agricultural Zone

Explanation given by Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu **Thiru. Edappadi K.Palaniswami** in the Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly on 11.03.2020 regarding Hydrocarbon Project. *(English Translation)*

Hon'ble Speaker Sir,

The Tamil Nadu Government has enacted a law that there will be no more Hydrocarbon Project in Tamil Nadu. At this juncture, Hon'ble Member of Parliament, Thiru. Jagathrakshakan belonging to the DMK, has raised suspicions in Parliament.

The Tamil Nadu Government has declared Cauvery Delta Districts as a Protected Agricultural Zone. The announcement was made by me in the Assembly to make sure that only the State Government had powers to admit or reject any projects in any part of the State and the Central Government would not interfere in it. This was informed by the Union Minister himself in his letter to the Tamil Nadu Government. We had received authorization

letter from the Central Government in this connection. I have already read the letter received from the Central Government in the Assembly.

Even after the Central Government had given the concurrence letter to the State Government, DMK MP questioned how the State Government could announce the Delta Districts as Protected Agricultural Zone and questioned how the State Government could implement it without the permission of the Central Government. The Member did not stop with that. He asked how the State Government could function against the Central Government. We enacted the law after taking all the necessary precautions and safeguards. When I read the DMK MP's question in newspapers, I felt that the Member concerned had placed the question without knowing the rights of either the State Government or the Central Government. Hon'ble Amma's Government has announced the project only after taking into consideration the interests of Delta farmers. It has now become clear that the DMK did not like it. It was only they who gave permission for the Hydrocarbon Projects in the State. It was they who announced an agitation during our rule against a project which was not in existence. So, when they were in power in the State or a partner in the Central Ministry, they did not do anything good for the Delta farmers. But, now they are trying to stop the scheme at any cost by raising the issue in Parliament. This is what is known in Tamil as rocking the cradle after pinching the child. I would like to tell them that their drama will not succeed in Tamil Nadu. I think they are afraid that if the Act, which will be beneficial to the people, comes into force, they cannot not do politics in the Delta Districts. Hon'ble Central Minister himself had made it clear in Parliament that this Act pertained to the State. Based on the powers of the State Government only, the Draft proposal of the Act has been passed in the Assembly. There is no doubt in this. I assure the Hon'ble Member that hereafter no new Hydrocarbon Project can be brought in Tamil Nadu.

We have enacted the law without any imperfections. You (the Opposition party) blamed the Central Government. They also explained clearly in their letter and the letter was also read in the House. Perhaps you may not like this Government enacting this Act, but there are no loopholes in the Act. This was explained clearly by our Hon'ble Minister for Law in the House yesterday. So, you need not have any fear.

You (the Opposition party) wanted to prevent the Act at any cost. Your intention, it seems, is to prevent such an Act during the AIADMK

Government rule. We placed our demand clearly to the Central Government and based on our demand, the Hon'ble Union Minister for Environment clearly wrote in that letter. After the receipt of the letter, I read the letter in the House. I would like to assert in the House that just because you want to create confusion in the minds of Delta farmers, you repeatedly mention it. There is no lacuna in the Act.

Even if you (the Opposition party) talk loudly it will not happen. The Hon'ble Union Minister for Environment has clearly mentioned that the State Government has got the power. Only if the State Government gives permission it can be implemented. For that only we have brought this Act. So, you need not have any doubts.

I have already made it clear. No new Hydrocarbon project can be brought in Tamil Nadu. Only the State Government has the power. This has been reiterated by the Hon'ble Union Minister in Parliament. The Central Minister also gave a clear reply to your party MP. Again and again if you try to raise the issue to create problems and do politics, it will not succeed.

The Deputy Leader of the Opposition is a lawyer. If it was banned here, then you know, where will they go? This is an important issue. It is the demand of the delta farmers for a long time. Let us first pass it here. We have given all protection to the Act. The farmers should be protected. That is our foremost duty. This is the first move of the Government. After the announcement of Special Agricultural Zone, no new Hydrocarbon Project could be brought here. Permission will not be given. We have made it clear in the Act. If we ban the existing projects, they will go to court immediately. Apart from going to court, the State Government has to bear the entire investment expenses. Because, they had invested several thousand crore. As a lawyer, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition knows all these things well. You are more experienced than us. You know the issues involved in it. I would like to inform them through you that to prevent such issues only we made it clear through the Act that no new Hydrocarbon projects can be started in the Delta Districts.

Hon'ble Chief Minister's clarification on Corona

Clarification made by the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu **Thiru. Edappadi K.Palaniswami,** in the Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly on 12.03.2020, regarding steps taken in Tamil Nadu to prevent spread of Corona virus. *(English Translation)*

Hon'ble Speaker Sir,

To allay doubts about the Corona virus, the Hon'ble Minister for Health explained clearly in detail how the virus infects people and spreads. You need not panic. The virus spreads to others only when those affected by the disease either cough or sneeze. Here nobody is affected by the disease. So, you need not have any fear. Perhaps the Hon'ble Member is afraid as the Hon'ble Minister for Health said that those who are above 70 years of age are more likely to be affected by the virus. But the member need not have any fear. As far as the Health Department of the State is concerned, our doctors are the best. Once they come to know that a person has been affected, the doctors have given the best treatment. So, there is no need for any fear at all. The Hon'ble Minister for Health said that the disease spread only from those who returned from abroad. The Government had screened about 1.5 lakh people who returned from abroad. Those who were affected by the disease were given treatment. Rest of the people have been sent home. So, as far as Tamil Nadu is concerned, nobody need nurture any fear. The disease spreads only when those who are affected sneeze or cough, or as you said, touch the table, visit marriage functions or airports or railway stations. I would like to inform the House, through You, Sir that our medical team tests passengers as soon as they alight from planes. If the team comes to know that any of the passengers are affected by the virus they are taken to hospitals and given the proper treatment if they are affected by the disease.

Hon'ble Speaker Sir,

Only when those who are affected by the disease sneeze or cough, the disease spreads. This infection has been found only in those coming from abroad. Local residents do not have any symptoms. Those who come from abroad are tested and those who have the symptoms are immediately taken to hospitals and given treatment by the State Government. The Hon'ble Minister for Health had made it clear that nobody need panic on this score.

Hon'ble Chief Minister orders slew of measures to prevent Corona Virus from infecting people

Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu **Thiru. Edappadi K.Palaniswami**, clarifies regarding preventive measures taken in Tamil Nadu to prevent Corona Virus from spreading on 19.03.2020. *(English Translation)*

Hon'ble Amma's Government, in keeping with wise saying that 'Prevention is Better than Cure' (Varumun kaappom), has been taking various measures continuously to prevent Corona Virus from spreading in the State. The Hon'ble Chief Minister issued the following orders as precautionary measures and preventive steps to prevent the spread of the virus. In this connection, 3 review meetings were conducted on 09.03.2020, 13.03.2020 and 16.03.2020 respectively, and detailed instructions and orders have been issued. These instructions and orders should be followed strictly by all Department officials.

In all Districts, special clinics should be set up immediately for isolated persons and they should be provided with bed and all other medical facilities.

Doctors attached to the Health Department should be in continuous touch with the persons who are isolated in their houses through video conferencing and give them proper medical advice, besides consoling them at regular intervals.

In all hospitals, disease prevention and sanitary measures steps should be given more thrust. Sanitary workers should be adequately protected with protective shields, protective dresses, hand gloves and protective shoes.

In all Corporations, Municipalities, Town Panchayats and Panchayats, disinfectant should be sprayed at least twice a day in places where people normally gather in large numbers.

All weekly markets are directed to close till 31.03.2020.

Anti-Corona virus activities should be taken in Courts, Airports, Railway Stations, Metro Rail Stations, Bus Stands and Ports, where people assemble in large numbers and disinfectant should be sprayed at least thrice a day in these places.

Awareness about Corona Virus should be created among employees and workers of the software parks, small, micro and large-scale industrial units. In these units, full-fledged disease prevention activities should be undertaken. Canteens in these institutions should be maintained cleanly. To reduce the

number of workers/employees coming to the offices, they should be given the choice of working from home.

While big malls in Tamil Nadu have already been closed, big textile shops, Jewel shops, supermarkets, having centralized air-conditioning facilities should be closed from tomorrow as there is a possibility of people gathering in large numbers in these places. However, in jewel shops where people have already given orders, separate entry should be made for the customers to get their ordered goods.

Grocery shops selling essential articles, multi-purpose shops, vegetable and fruits shops, medical shops and hotels will function normally.

Sri Murugan Temple, Vadapalani, Sri Parthasarathi Temple, Triplicane, Sri Kapaleeswarar Temple, Mylapore, Sri Meenakshi Temple, Madurai, Sri Murugan Temple, Tiruchendur, Sri Ramanthaswami Temple, Rameswaram, Sri Murugan Temple, Palani, Sri Annamalaiyar Temple, Tiruvannamalai, Sri Murugan Temple, Tiruttani, Sri Kamakshi Amman Temple, Kancheepuram, Sri Mariamman Temple, Samayapuram, Tiruchi, Sri Ranganatha Swami Temple, Srirangam and other big temples in the State, where people come in large numbers for worshipping will be closed for public darshan till March 31. However, in all these temple tri-kala Pujas will be conducted as per the Agama Sastras.

Similarly entry of people into big churches and mosques/ dhargas will be temporarily suspended till March 31 and the respective District Collectors will hold talks with the church/ mosque officials concerned and take necessary steps.

As there is a possibility of Corona Virus spreading from other States, it has been decided to reduce the services of Inter- State bus services. Similarly the Southern Railway General Manager has been asked to reduce the frequency of trains coming from other States.

Testing of passengers at the Domestic Terminals of all airports in the State will be strengthened.

All passengers coming from the neighbouring States either by road or train will be subjected to rigorous screening before their entry into the State. All Departments concerned have been properly advised in this connection. Special vehicles at airports and railway stations should be provided to those who are subjected to isolation. Such vehicles should be kept clean by spraying disinfectants and the drivers of the vehicles should be provided necessary protective gear to operate the vehicles.

The Departments have been advised to purchase sufficient number of disinfection sprayers and other protective gadgets using the State's Disaster Relief Fund.

Hon'ble Chief Minister Thiru. Edappadi K.Palaniswami has appealed to people to co-operate fully with Hon'ble Amma's Government in its measures against the Corona Virus and in protecting themselves from the Virus. The Hon'ble Chief Minister wants people to join with the Government in its war against the Corona Virus and keep Tamil Nadu as a disease-free State. ■

Wild life safari in Vandalur, mini zoo for Dindigul's Sirumalai Reserve Forest

Announcement of the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu **Thiru. Edappadi K. Palaniswami's** in the Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly on 13.03.2020 under Rule 110. *(English Translation)*

Department of Environment and Forests

Hon'ble Speaker Sir,

I make the following announcements on behalf of the Department of Forest:

1. An allotment of Rs.22.75 crore will be made in the current financial year for providing infrastructure facilities like electrical equipment, tables and chairs and installation of CCTV camera in the newly constructed Forest Department Headquarters Office buildings at Velacheri, Chennai.

2. A wildlife safari to see wild animals at close quarters will be set up at the Arignar Anna Zoological Park, Vandalur at a cost of Rs.11.50 crore.

3. As the Sirumalai Reserve Forest in Dindigul is the home for the critically endangered Slender Loris species, a mini zoo will be set up there, on a 40 hectare area at a cost of Rs.10 crore to protect the species. A variety of species like wild cattle, 'kadamaan', grey bear, Asiatic civet cat, wild cat, Bengal tiger, spotted deer, marsh land crocodile, peacock, 'veli maan', ostrich, Indian python, rattle snake, cobra, Malaysian python, fox and Bengal fox will be brought to this park. The zoo will have facilities such as enclosures for these, medical treatment, feeding place, a garden to raise food and accessibility for visitors.

4. The minor zoo at Kurumbappatti, Salem will be upgraded as 'Middle Level wild life park'. For this, wild life fauna will be brought to the park and essential facilities like habitats for the fauna, medical facilities, food storing room, an explanatory centre and foot path, will be provided at a cost of Rs. 8 crore.

5. To prevent occurrence of forest fire by Nature and human beings and safeguard the wildlife from going out of the forest, a forest police and fire prevention commando force will be created and the necessary equipment will be supplied to them at a cost of Rs.23.26 crore.

6. Elephant exodus from forests endangers human lives. To prevent this, I am happy to announce, concrete pillars will be erected and a 5-layer wire fence will be set up for a distance of

60 km in the Districts of Dharmapuri, Dindigul and Theni at a cost of Rs. 21 crore.

Following are the announcements for the Department of Environment:

1. For the offices of the District Environment Engineer at Namakkal, Ramanathapuram and Nagercoil, 3 new buildings will be constructed at an estimate of Rs.9 crore in the current financial year.

2. At the Senguttai lake in Indira Nagar, Modachur Panchayat, Gobichettipalayam Panchayat Union, Erode District and Vannankuttai lake in Kullampalayam Panchayat, Gobichettipalayam Union, a pavement with a protective wall, a boat house, electric lights, children's park and a viewing tower will be set up at a cost of about Rs. 8 crore.

3. I am happy to announce that works will be undertaken to lay a separate sewage to prevent the sewage water polluting the Surya Kulam in an area of 7 acres and 76 cents in Arani Municipality, Tiruvannamalai District, desilt and increase the storage capacity of the Kulam, set up protective fencing after strengthening the bunds, and electric lights at a cost of about Rs.6.50 crore.

Department of School Education:

1. Twenty-five new Government primary schools will be opened in the coming academic year at a cost of Rs.5.72crore; 10 Government primary schools will be upgraded as middle-level schools at a cost of Rs.3.90 crore. Three additional classrooms, required for these schools will be constructed. Also, the required teacher posts will be filled up through re-deployment.

2. In the coming academic year, 15 Government middle-level schools will be upgraded as high schools. Besides providing infrastructure facilities for these schools at a cost of Rs.26.25 crore, the required additional teacher posts will be created at an expenditure of Rs.9.87 crore.

3. Thirty Government high schools will be upgraded as higher secondary schools. Required infrastructure facilities for these schools will be provided at a cost of Rs.55.50 crore and the needed additional teacher posts will be created at an expenditure of Rs.21.36 crore.

4. Steps have been taken to install CCTV cameras in 1,890 Government high and higher secondary schools in the first phase to ensure safety of students. In the coming academic year, this camera facility will be installed in the remaining 4,282 Government high and higher secondary schools at an expenditure of Rs.48.73 crore.

5. The annual maintenance and repair subsidy to Government school buildings and offices, I am happy to announce, will be increased from Rs.38.50 crore to Rs.100 crore in the year 2020-2021.

Department of Youth Welfare and Sports Development:

1. A new sports complex with an open air stadium with visitor's gallery and with sports facilities such as those for track events, basketball and volleyball courts, will be set up in Tiruppur District at a cost of Rs.18 crore.

2. Six high performance academies will be set up to further improve the skills of identified

talented sportspersons in the State and help them win medals in National and International events. These academies will be set up at a total cost of Rs.3.89 crore at Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium for track events, basketball and volleyball games, at Mayor Radhakrishnan Stadium for hockey and at Velacheri Swimming Pool complex (all in Chennai) for swimming events.

3. To further encourage sportspersons in indoor games, I am happy to announce, that a State-level coaching centre with 5 floors for carrom, Taekwondo, judo, fencing, bridge and other indoor games, will be set up at a cost of Rs.12.30 crore at Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium, Chennai.

Tamil Nadu remains a model State for whole of India in enrollment of students in higher education. I make the following announcements on behalf of this Department.

1. To upgrade and take up maintenance works in the buildings of 10 Government engineering colleges and 45 Government polytechnic colleges, Rs. 25 crore will be allotted in the first phase this year.

2. To enable field experience in industries and upgrade technical skills, Rs.16.60 crore will be allotted at the rate of Rs.16,600 each to 10,000 select students from engineering and polytechnic colleges every year.

3. Sixty-one new posts will be created at a recurring expenditure of Rs.6.33 crore for the efficient operation of high tension power supply in Government and Government aided engineering and polytechnic colleges.

4. The Institute of Advanced Study in Education, Saidapet, Chennai has the distinction of being the first such body to have been started in the whole of Asia for teacher's training. Its building was constructed in the 18th century. To renovate this old building without loss of its antiquity, works will be undertaken at an estimate of Rs.10.20 crore.

5. Likewise, the many old buildings of the famous Presidency College, Chennai, started in the year 1840 and enjoying the honour of being the third college to have been started in the country, as also the residence of the college principal will be renovated at a cost of Rs.10 crore while retaining its antiquity and beauty.

6. To improve the research skills of students studying in universities, Rs. 210 crore will be given to 6 universities for undertaking various research projects at the rate of Rs.35 crore each. The beneficiary universities are Anna University for research in electric vehicle technology, Annamalai University for research in sanitation and environment, Bharathidasan University for research in hygiene and skills, Bharathiyar University for Cancer research, Madurai Kamarajar University for biomedical research and Madras University for research in biomedical application.

7. In the context of students enrolment in higher education increasing by the year, I am extremely happy to announce that Rs.150 crore will be given for construction of additional class rooms and laboratories in Government arts and science colleges and for purchase of computer and accessories and wooden logistics. With this I resume my seat.

Hon'ble Chief Minister's crystal clear clarification on Special Agri zone

Reply of the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu **Thiru. Edappadi K.Palaniswami** in the Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly on 13.03.2020, to the Hon'ble DMK MLA, Thiru. A.P.Nandakumar regarding construction of Melarasampattu Dam in his Anaicut constituency. *(English Translation)*

Explanation given by Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu Thiru. Edappadi K.Palaniswami in the Legislative Assembly on 13.03.2020, regarding Special Agricultural Zone

It has been clearly said in the Constitution that the State Governments have got full powers to enact laws regarding agricultural subjects. Based on that only, we have brought this Act. We have given full legal protection to the Act. But they (Opposition party) do not want the State Government to get a good name for bringing this Act. So they are again and again creating all sorts of doubts. They also tried raising the issue in Parliament. The Union Minister concerned made it very clear that the State has got the powers to enact such a law. The State Government can act as per the powers enshrined in the Constitution. The Union Minister informed that the permission was given 2 years ago. I thought that you would ask questions regarding that also. But you did not raise that. As far as this Act is concerned, we have given full legal protection. We consulted legal luminaries and announced the Delta Districts as Special Agriculture Zone. I would like to inform you through the Speaker, that whichever way you try, there will not be any loophole in the Act.

Hon'ble Chief Minister asserts Government's sincerity in reducing number of liquor shops

Explanation of the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu
Thiru. Edappadi K.Palaniswami
on reduction of liquor shops in Tamil Nadu, in the Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly on 13.03.2020. *(English Translation)*

Hon'ble Speaker Sir,

Hon'ble Member charged that we have not implemented the election promise made by us during the Legislative Assembly election. During the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam rule, you had promised in your poll manifesto that 2 acres of land would be given to landless agriculturists. To how many farmers did you give the land? Where did you give? How many farmers benefited?

Promises made in the election manifestos can be implemented only in phases. All of them cannot be implemented within a fixed time. Whether it is Government, or the parties, they make promises in the election manifesto with the aim of implementing them. But on seeing the existing situation, I would like to inform the Hon'ble Member that the promises made in the election manifesto can be implemented but only in phases.

You did not implement your promise. Where did you give the 2 acre land? To how many people and in how many Districts? Shall I give the number of landless agriculturists in Tamil Nadu ? I shall give the exact figure of landless farmers tomorrow. To how many landless agriculturists did you give the land? It is a mere eyewash. But, we are not like that. Hon'ble Minister has explained clearly. He said that the number of IMFL shops would be reduced gradually. We are decreasing the number of shops. The Hon'ble Minister explained clearly the feasibility of implementing the promise. He said the same thing in all places. I have notes on hand on how your leader spoke. You are saying that everybody should accept the view that total prohibition should be brought in the State. But it is possible to implement it in phases only. The Government is careful that illicit liquor should not enter the State and it is on this score that Hon'ble Minister has said that it would be implemented step by step.

During his speech, Hon'ble Whip of the Opposition said that his party gave land to lakhs of landless farmers in the State. It is not in lakhs but to a few landless agriculture workers. I have the record with me. Nobody can hide it. I know to whom the land was given. You made an 'attractive' announcement without any basis. Through that 'bogus announcement' you came to power. That was what happened. What did you say?. You said that land would be given to landless agriculturists in the State. Did you take any statistics of how many landless farmers were there in the State? Do you know how many acres of land were available in the State. How was it possible to give the land. Do you know how many lakhs of landless farmers are there in the State, How many acres of land are available with the Government? How is possible to distribute the land? Without knowing all these things you announced the scheme, 'deceived' the people and came to power.

Hon'ble Chief Minister lays foundation stone for Theni Government Law College buildings

Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu Thiru. Edappadi K.Palaniswami, at the Secretariat on 06.03.2020, laid the foundation stone for the Government Law College buildings and for the men's and women's hostel buildings, to be constructed at a cost of Rs. 89 crore, at Thappukundu Village in Theni Division in Theni District through video conferencing.

The Hon'ble Chief Minister, making a statement in the Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly on 10.07.2019 under Rule 110, said that the number of students studying law has been increasing steadily. To provide legal education to students belonging to economically and socially Backward Classes at a lesser cost, 3 Government Law Colleges would be started in the State.

As per the announcement, a Government Order was issued for appointing Special Officers for undertaking preliminary works for starting 3 Government Law Colleges with 3-year and 5-year law courses, one each in Salem, Namakkal and Theni from the academic year 2019-2020, with an intake of 80 students in the first year.

Accordingly, the Theni Government Law College started functioning from 29.08.2019 at the Chandragupta Maurya International School campus on the Dindigul - Kumuli National Highway in Theni District.

To provide permanent buildings for the new Government Law College at Thappakundu Village in Theni Division in Theni District on a 566.5 hectare land at a cost of Rs. 86 crore, the Hon'ble Chief Minister laid the foundation stone through video conferencing at the Secretariat .

The new Theni Government Law College will have 26 classrooms for 400 students, including a seminar hall, video conferencing room, lecture room, separate rest rooms for male and female students, computer laboratory, indoor stadium, a model court room of international standard to facilitate students participate in the international legal competition, modern college office, administrative buildings complex, library building with high speed wi-fi facilities, and auditorium with modern, technical facilities.

NEWS IN PICTURE

Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu **Thiru. Edappadi K. Palaniswami** presided over a meeting at the Salem District Collector's office on 17.04.2020, to review the measures being taken to ensure that Corona Virus infections did not spread in Salem District. The Salem District Collector and other high Government officials participated in this meeting.

Hon'ble Chief Minister inaugurates work to renovate Kattalai High Level Canal

Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu Thiru. Edappadi K.Palaniswami laid the foundation for the renovation and modernization of the Kattalai High Level Canal in the River Cauvery, to be executed at a cost of Rs.335.50 crore, on behalf of the Water Resources Department of the Public Works Department at the Secretariat on 06.03.2020, through video conferencing. The renovation and the modernization will improve irrigation management and efficient functioning of the canal. On the occasion, the Hon'ble Chief Minister also laid the foundation stone for new schemes worth Rs. 209.95 crore and declared open completed schemes executed at a cost of Rs.33.50 crore, on behalf of the Public Works Department.

Hon'ble Puratchi Thalaivi Amma's Government has been implementing various irrigation management schemes to find new irrigation sources, to store rain water in tanks and water bodies without wasting it, to recharge ground water and to provide water for irrigation and drinking water to people, which will all lead to economic development of the country.

In this direction, foundation stone was laid by Hon'ble Chief Minister Thiru. Edappadi K.Palaniswami for renovation and modernization of the Kattalai High Level Canal. By implementing the scheme, 20,185 acres of land in Karur District and 3,589 acres in Tiruchirapalli District, totally 23,774 acres, will be brought under irrigation.

In Tenkasi District, a dam across Kalinga river, at a cost of Rs. 1.40 crore, at the diversion point of the Gudalur Canal in Naranapuram in Sivagiri Division and a check dam across Nisaba Nadhi at Panaiyur in Sankarankovil Division at a cost of Rs. 1.13 crore;

In Coimbatore District, check dams, one each across Koraiyaru at Mannur Village in Pollachi Division, at a cost of Rs.1.79 crore, across Kumittipathi River at Tirumalaipalayam in Coimbatore South District, at a cost of Rs.87 lakh, across Periyapallam at Thekkampatti Village in Mettupalayam Division at a cost of Rs. 1.47 crore, and across Periyapallam in Kemmarampalayam Village in Mettupalayam Division at a cost of Rs.1.02 crore;

In Cuddalore District, check dams, one each across Vellaru in Gudalur Village in Thittakudi Division at a cost of Rs.15.77 crore and across Manimutharu River in Paravalur Village in Virdhachalam Division at a cost of Rs.10.05 crore;

Totally schemes completed at a cost Rs.33.50 crore were declared open by Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu Thiru. Edappadi K.Palaniswami.

In Kancheepuram District, a dam at a cost of Rs. 55.85 crore across Adyar branch river at Orathur in Sriperumbudur division, a distribution canal in delta areas of the river to improve water delivery to mitigate floods and restoration of Chitlapakkam lake in Tambaram division to make it eco friendly at a cost of Rs. 25 crore;

Under the World Bank's Scheme of restoration and renovation of canals, 26 schemes at a cost of Rs. 121.05 crore, for strengthening canal banks, repairing and reconstructing the sluices and de-silting flow and irrigation canals ; in Theni District, check dams, one each across Kottakudi River in Anaikaraipatti Village in Bodi Division at a cost of Rs. 1.97 crore, across Sudha Gangai Odai at Manickapuram Village at a cost of Rs.1.03 crore, across Chinnaru in Bodi Village at a cost of Rs. 2.07 crore and across Nagalaru at Shanmugasundaram Village in Andipatti Division at a cost of Rs. 2.98 crore, were started.

Hon'ble Chief Minister Thiru. Edappadi K.Palaniswami laid foundation stones for the above schemes, totally costing Rs. 209.95 crore.

On the same occasion, appointment orders for 285 Assistant Engineers for the Water Resources Department and for 125 Assistant Engineers for the Buildings Division of the Public Works Department, selected through the Tamil Nadu Public Service Commission, were also handed over. Hon'ble Chief Minister Thiru. Edappadi K.Palaniswami handed over the orders to 7 selected candidates as a token.

Irrigation and Power Day was observed in New Delhi on 19.02.2020, on behalf of the Central Board of Irrigation and Power. On the occasion, the States, organizations and officials who excel in water management, power and renewable energy management were honoured. Tamil Nadu was selected for the best execution of Dam Rehabilitation and Improvement Project and the award was given by the Union Minister of State for Jal Shakti, Thiru. Rattan Lal Kataria. The Principal Secretary of the Public Works Department, Dr. K.Manivasan I.A.S., showed the award to the Hon'ble Chief Minister, who congratulated the Department for winning the Award.

Hon'ble Chief Minister confers Avvaiyar award on pathbreaking pioneer, Tmt. R.Kannagi

Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu Thiru. Edappadi K.Palaniswami, at the Secretariat on 09.03.2020, honoured and handed over Avvaiyar Award for the year 2020 to Tmt. R.Kannagi of Tiruvannamalai District for her social activities, which include encouraging formation of Self Help Groups, organizing cremation for unclaimed dead bodies, and for her steps to convert thatched houses into tiled ones.

Hon'ble Puratchi Thalaivi Amma announced that Avvaiyar Award will be given every year to a woman for honouring women who are involved in social reforms, women's development, communal amity, service towards the language, art, science, culture, newspaper, administration and contributions in various fields. The Award, to be given on International Women's Day, consists of One lakh Rupee cash, a Gold Medal of 8 grams, a certificate and a shawl.

Tmt.R.Kannagi has been involved in social service activities since 1992. She was instrumental in converting over 350 thatched houses into tiled houses and was a pioneer in the formation of Self Help Groups. Tmt. Kannagi was instrumental in encouraging SHGs in Ward 16 of Tiruvannamalai Municipality and was also the co-ordinator for over 528 Self Help Groups. She is also running a federation by name 'Vizhuthugal'.

Breaking the custom that only men could cremate dead bodies, Tmt. Kannagi showed that women also could do the same work. She is in charge of the Tiruvannamalai Municipality gas burning ground. She has conducted final ritual for over thousands of unclaimed dead bodies by following legal procedure. For her selfless service, she was given the District level Women's Day Award for the year 2016, Republic Day Award for the year 2018, Environment Management Award for the best soil waste management for the year 2019.

For the dedicated service of Tmt. Kannagi, the Tamil Nadu Government selected her for the 2020 Avvaiyar Award and the Hon'ble Chief Minister, Thiru. Edappadi K.Palaniswami handed over the Award to Tmt.R.Kannagi.

In her acceptance speech, Tmt. Kannagi thanked the Hon'ble Chief Minister and the Tamil Nadu Government for recognizing her social activities.

Clarification on ban of single-use plastic

Clarification made by Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu **Thiru. Edappadi K. Palaniswami,** in the Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly on 11.03.2020 regarding ban of single-use plastics. *(English Translation)*

Hon'ble Speaker Sir,

Hon'ble Member stressed the need for complete ban of plastics. Only for the complete ban of the plastics, the Government has banned the use of single use plastics. For the complete ban, the co-operation of the public is necessary. As the people have been using plastics for a long time, it is a difficult task to implement the ban immediately. Only if people co-operate fully with the Government, the complete ban of plastics will be possible. The State Government has taken steps to ban single use plastics. For that purpose, Revenue officials and officers of the Environment Department and local bodies have been nominated, and they are making regular inspections and taking action against those keeping stocks of banned plastics. The violators are also fined. Despite all these measures, only if people also co-operate the ban will become a reality. I would like to inform the Hon'ble Member through You, Sir that as far as the Government is concerned, the necessary steps are being taken.

Only because plastic use must be banned not only in Ooty but in all hill stations like Kodaikanal and Yercaud, and also in all places, the Government has banned the use of single use plastics. But the people also should co-operate. Without people's co-operation, it is difficult to implement the ban. People have been using plastics for a long time. The Government has been creating awareness about the ban among the public through school and college students, youth and Self Help Groups. Only if people of all strata of society co-operate with the Government, the ban can be effective. I would like to inform the Hon'ble Member through You, Sir, that the Government's ban on single use plastics is not confined to hill stations alone, it is applicable to the entire State. Single use plastic products have been banned in the State. Revenue officials, inspection staff of the Environment Department and local bodies are conducting regular checks in all shops. If they find banned plastic products, they seize them and fine them for violating the ban. The Government is ready to make the ban more stringent if all sections of people co-operate with the Government. Plastic ban is most important. I would like to inform the Hon'ble Members through You, Sir that for the first time in India, a law has been enacted in Tamil Nadu to ban plastics in the State.

Smart meters for Chennai Power consumers

Hon'ble Chief Minister renames sanitary personnel as 'Cleanliness Workers'

Statement of the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu
Thiru. Edappadi K. Palaniswami in the Tamil Nadu
Legislative Assembly under Rule 110 - 18.03.2020. *(English Translation)*

Department of Energy.

Hon'ble Speaker Sir,

Uninterrupted power supply plays a great role in a country's growth. I am extremely happy to announce in this House the new power projects to be undertaken by the Department of Energy in the current year.

1. To increase revenue, provide excellent service to consumers and reduce technical and commercial losses, a scheme to fix smart meters will first be implemented in Chennai city to its 42 lakh power consumers at an expense of Rs.4,300 crore. The scheme will be introduced in other Districts in the State gradually.

2. To meet the increasing power load, the 230 KV power sub-station at Azhagarkoil, Madurai District will be upgraded as 400 KV station, the 110 kilo volt sub-stations at Irugur in Coimbatore District and at Tiruppalai in Madurai District into 230 KV stations. A new 230 KV station will be set up at Arasanur in Sivagangai District. Besides, 110 KV stations, numbering 22 will be installed in different Districts for continuing the uninterrupted power supply to consumers. I am happy to inform this House that these works will be undertaken at an estimate of Rs.1,998 crore.

3. Electric posts in coastal Districts get dislodged from their positions during times of natural calamities, interrupting power supply. To avert this contingency and ensure uniform power supply, about 200 km long transmission lines to 33 KV sub-stations in the Districts of Tiruvallur, Kancheepuram, Ramanathapuram, Kanniyakumari and Thoothukudi will be converted to underground cables.

4. To further strengthen power distribution infrastructure, new 33/11 KV sub-stations will be set up at 23 places. Also, 13 transformers in the existing 33/11 KV sub-stations will either be increased or their capacity will be enhanced. I wish to inform this House that these works will be undertaken at an expense of Rs.187 crore.

The following announcements are made on behalf of the Department of Rural Development and Panchayat Raj.

1. To upgrade narrow streets and pathways in rural areas, cement concrete roads to a length of 350 km and paver block roads to a length of 200 km will be laid in the 2020-2021 financial year at an estimate of Rs.213.26 crore. Also, to improve transport in rural areas and negotiate water bodies, 850 culverts and 350 minor bridges (totally 1,200) will be constructed at an estimate of Rs.170.18 crore.

2. With the lofty ideal of improving all the basic facilities in residential Adi Dravidar areas, the 2020-2021 Budget has provided means to integrate different schemes and implement them after allotting funds for them. Accordingly, Rs.2,500 crore will be allotted from the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme and funds from Central and State Finance Commission and Amma Adi Dravidar Residential Development Scheme. From this fund, I am happy to inform this House, all basic facilities, including drinking water supply, link roads, cement/paver block roads, street lights, drainage and improvements to crematoria will be provided in Adi Dravidar residential areas.

3. To provide easy access to nearby markets, schools and hospitals for rural hamlets and improve main and link roads, 299 rural roads will be upgraded to a length of 1,044 km at an estimate of Rs.553.07 crore.

4. To create link road facility to rural hamlets and to areas, not connected so far, single-layer gravel roads will be laid to a length of 1,150 km at a cost of Rs.246.90 crore in the financial year 2020-2021.

5. Ten thousand cement concrete check dams will be constructed across streams, Odais and canals in rural areas at an estimate of Rs.460 crore in the year 2020-2021.

6. Compound walls to a length of 650 km will be constructed for rural schools at an estimate of Rs.440.05 crore in the financial year 2020-2021.

7. To protect livestock in rural areas, 15,000 sheds – 9,000 for cattle and 6,000 for goats –will be constructed at an estimate of Rs.258.60 crore in 2020-2021 financial year.

8. For increasing the area of cultivation by improving irrigation facilities to fields, 1,000 wells – 500 private and 500 community wells – will be set up at an estimate of Rs.98.65crore in the year 2020-2021. The cost of a private well will be Rs.7.48 lakh and that of the community well Rs.12.25 lakh.

9. New buildings will be constructed to 500 Panchayat offices whose buildings are more than 30 years old, unusable and are in a high State of repair, at an estimate of Rs.22.65 lakh each.

10. In 2019-2020, the target for bank link loan to women self help groups was fixed at Rs.12,500 crore but the actual disbursal was Rs.13,301 crore. Taking this into account, I am happy to inform, the target for 2020-2021 has been fixed at Rs.14,000 crore.

11. 'Senior citizen Self Help Groups', numbering 12,525 at the rate of one for each Panchayat, will be created in the financial year 2020-2021 and an assistance of Rs.18.79 crore will be provided as Resource Fund at the rate of Rs.15,000 per each group. Each group will have 5 to 10 members and the aim is to benefit 1.25 lakh old age persons.

I wish to make the following announcements on behalf of the Department of Municipal Administration and Water Supply:

1. Roads in all Municipal Corporations including Greater Chennai, Municipalities

and Town Panchayats, damaged on account of underground drainage and water supply development works and due to natural calamities will be repaired at an estimate of Rs.1,000 crore under the Urban Road Infrastructure Scheme.

2. Underground Drainage scheme works will be taken up in 14 wards inclusive of the newly annexed areas of Thudiyalur, Vadavelli, Goundampalayam and Veerakeralam to the Coimbatore Municipal Corporation, at an estimate of Rs.610 crore.

3. Work on providing house connections for drinking water supply in all areas of Madurai Municipal Corporation is already going on under two phases. In the 3rd phase, works to give house connections in the remaining 57 wards will be taken up at an estimate of Rs.310 crore.

4. Surveys will be undertaken and detailed project reports will be prepared for implementing a smart transport system in Coimbatore and Madurai cities for reduction of traffic congestion by integrating schemes like traffic management and transport information centre with command and control centres. An Innovations outlook centre will be set up in Chennai for introducing and explaining to the public, the innovations of small-scale industrial entrepreneurs and students. This Centre will function under the Smart City establishment.

5. To increase the green cover in the State, vacant places lying waste in Municipal Corporations and Municipalities will be planted with trees in the 'Miyawaki' method - more number of trees in small areas.

6. Open air gyms and yoga centres will be set up in parks with sufficient space in Municipal Corporation and Municipality areas.

7. Bodinayakanur in Theni District is an excellent Municipality and is more than a century old, having been created in the year 1916. Located in the foothills of the Western Ghats, it has an area of 7.23 sq.km. and a population of 75,665. Considering the heritage of this Municipality and by way of fulfilling the long-standing demand of the people of the town, a new 'runway' will be set up for the bus stand there; several other infrastructures including a weekly shandy will also be set up. Besides, parks in the city will be developed. To execute this scheme, Hon'ble Amma's Government will give Rs.50 crore as special fund.

8. Sanitary staff in the 15 Municipal Corporations, 121 Municipalities, 528 Town Panchayats and 12,525 Village Panchayats, totally number 64,583. In many other sectors also, sanitary workers are engaged in cleaning work. Their work - maintaining cleanliness in public places, taking up cleaning work during natural calamities, safeguarding environment and hygiene by removing rubbish from roads as also from bus stands, markets, temples and commercial complexes – plays an important role in safeguarding people's welfare and public health. In their interest, Hon'ble Amma's Government is taking many steps like constructing quarters for them, conducting periodical medical camps for their family members and special employment opportunity camps for their wards. In continuation of this and by way of honouring them and fulfilling their long standing demand, I am very happy to state, that they will hereafter be called 'Thooymai Paniyalargal'. With this, I resume my seat.

Hon'ble Chief Minister lauds Amma's visionary outlook for State's excellent road infrastructure

Reply of the Hon'be Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu **Thiru. Edappadi K. Palaniswami's** debate on the demands for grants for Highways and Public Works Departments for the year 2020-2021, on 18.03.2020. *(English Translation)*

Hon'ble Speaker Sir,

A path on the ground emerges out of constant treading by human feet, not by the footsteps of animals -however big or strong they may be. Man laid the paths, flew in the sky, delved deep into the sea and searched the earth. He covered the whole world in his fight against natural disasters. To link the new places with the old ones, he converted the paths into roads. He transformed deserts into gardens. Roads play a great role in human civilization. Roads also connote in a way educational institutions (kalvichaalaigal) as they take people to the realm of knowledge, factories (thozhirchaalaigal) to create goods and highways (nedunchaalaigal) to travel.

This House knows well that Tamil Nadu has received the distinction of being the premier State in the country from the Central Government. Hon'ble Amma had the visionary outlook of making Tamil Nadu the premier State in India and if this has been realized today, it is because this Government is journeying on the path laid down by her. I am happy to inform this House that excellent road infrastructure is one of the factors for achieving this distinction.

As hearts bind people, roads link towns. Each road that is laid gives greater freedom to people. To improve their knowledge, they get opportunities to travel; to sell goods, ways get opened up; greater facilities come about to purchase inputs. Doors open to every nook and corner of the country; roads don't represent routes alone but also lead to settlements. Revenue increases; awareness improves; science reaches the eight directions; encourages developmental activities by attracting industries and investments through quality road infrastructure.

Roads play an important role in stabilizing the development of multi-level transport by linking airports, railway stations and harbours. They also play a role in integrating the State. That is why the needed funds are allotted for upgrading roads and bridges that link the roads.

For the use of people in Tamil Nadu, the Highways Department maintains roads to a length of 66,039 kilometres. Through the implementation of many schemes like road development, laying of by-pass and multi-lane roads, construction of river bridges, flyovers, railway over/under bridges and by undertaking safety works for accident-free journey, the Highways Department ensures safe and pleasant journey on roads surrounded by greenery.

Administrative Set Up: The Highways Department has many wings, each one headed by a Chief Engineer and under his direct supervision other engineers/workers function. Vacancies in the Department are filled up quickly and the incumbents are given special training. In the 3 years – 2016 to 2019 – 533 assistant engineers were selected, appointed and trained and today they are in the field, working in an excellent manner.

Comprehensive Road Infrastructure Development Programme (CRIDP): As for road facilities, many who have travelled here have stated that there is no State in India that is comparable to Tamil Nadu. Even hamlets in Tamil Nadu have good roads. We have provided bus transport facilities there too. Laying excellent roads of global standards is the life-breath of the Highways Department. Roads are laid to reach far off places in a short time.

Hon'ble Puratchi Thalaivi Amma designed a magnificent scheme to upgrade all the roads in the State every year. With a visionary outlook, she designed this scheme in the year 2005-2006. As a result of this scheme, 98 per cent of the State highways today are two way/multi lane roads and 97 per cent of the State important roads are bed level causeway/two way/multi-lane roads. This scheme also encompasses safety works. Under this CRIDP scheme, 12,662 km long road works and 1,999 bridge works have been completed, starting from the year 2017-2018, at a cost of Rs.8,961.89 crore.

Improvement of Riding Quality Programme (I.R.Q.P.): Our Government launched a new scheme in 2018-2019 for upgrading the road surface in more number of roads. Under this scheme, every year the road surface is upgraded to a length of 3,500 km and as such the Highways Department is moving towards the policy of 'quality roads, comfortable and safe journey'. For the year 2018-2019, sanction was accorded for the upgrade of 3,825.58 km long roads at a cost of Rs.850 crore and works have been completed. For the year 2019-2020,

sanction has been accorded for upgrading road surface of 3,597.27 km long roads at a cost of Rs.1,039.78 crore and works are being executed. In the olden days, kings were praised for laying roads. Constructing bridges across rivers and laying broad roads in places where people travel are acts that will spur development at galloping speed.

Road Safety: Fast travel is ensured as roads are broad and of good quality. Though road safety rules are displayed, accidents occur due to the negligence of users or breaking of rules. Safety measures are taken through the 5 Departments of Transport, Highways, Police, Health and Education to mitigate the intensity of accidents and improve the safety features.

The percentage of road accidents and mortality has come down greatly now-a-days on account of the safety works undertaken from 2014-2015 at a cost of Rs.700 crore under the road safety fund and Rs.1,486 crore under the CRIDP. The mortality rate in 2018 has come down by 24 per cent compared to 2017. The Indian Parliament has appreciated and recorded the steps taken by Tamil Nadu Government on road safety.

NABARD and Village Roads: A magnificent scheme was drafted to improve bus routes that were under the maintenance of the Department of Panchayat Raj. In the 3 years 2017-2018, 2018-2019 and 2019-2020, 4,861.70 km long Panchayat and Panchayat union roads were taken up for upgrading them as 'other district roads' at a cost of Rs.2,772.48 crore. In this, works on 2,582.30 km long roads have been completed at a cost of Rs.1,270.66 crore. Rest of the works are under progress.

Green roads: Every year more than 1,000 saplings are being planted and maintained in all sub-divisions in highways to realize the policy 'green roads, safe travel'. One lakh five thousand and eight hundred new saplings were planted and maintained in 5 divisions of Tiruchi Taluk in the place of 22,658 trees that were uprooted by the Gaja cyclone. Re-plantation steps, where affected trees were pulled out with roots and planted in safe places, have yielded good results.

National Highways: Of the 6,634 km long roads under the control of the Central Ministry of road transport in our State, 1,900 km long roads are maintained/monitored through the highways wing and 4,734 km roads through the national highways authority of India. The quality of the road comes down as the contract for works in some of the roads, maintained by the highways authority of India gets cancelled. This was detected and in the interest of the general public, the Union Minister was met and pressured on the need for maintenance of roads and now they have been rectified.

To cite instances, the Poonamallee-Walajah national highways and roads like Pondicherry-Krishnagiri and Chennai-Tada roads have not only been rectified but some bridge works, suspended in the middle have been resumed.

Also, though the national highways authority maintains the Tambaram-Guduvancheri road and Vanagaram-Sriperumbudur road, they are being widened into 8-lane traffic due to the pressure exerted by the State Government. These works will greatly reduce the traffic congestion caused by vehicles entering/ exiting Chennai. A special survey was taken for

averting accidents in national highways and on the basis of its findings, road infrastructure is taken up.

Road maintenance with modern machines: To maintain highways roads in an excellent way in Municipal Corporation areas including Chennai, sand, rubbish and stagnant rain water collecting on either side of road ends, are removed with modern machines. In Chennai Corporation, 6 road sweepers, a Midget mud removing machine to clear the sand heaps and a super sucker cum jet rodding machine to remove the blocks in storm water drains and culverts are in use. Besides these, 10 special machines to repair the roads have been purchased at a cost of Rs.536.80 lakh and roads are maintained well.

Land acquisition: Separate units, headed by the District Revenue officer have been formed and works have been taken up to expedite acquisition of 1,853 hectares of land in 554 villages, needed for 108 works like laying, through the Highways Department, by-pass roads, ring roads, flyovers, railway bridges and high level bridges. This will help completion of scheme works in time. Moreover, many works have been implemented excellently through direct talks and paying special attention to court cases (for acquisition of land).

Greater Chennai Development: To reduce traffic congestion to a great extent in Greater Chennai, works on construction of over bridges in 9 places are to be completed by the end of this year. These over bridges are to come about at Koyambedu Kaliamman Koil, Pallavaram, Tiruvottiyur-Ponneri-Panchetti road, Kolathur Erattai Yeri (Right side), subway for vehicles at Korattur, foot over bridge at Tambaram with escalators and over bridges at Keezhkattalai, Medavakkam and Velacheri. Administrative sanction has been granted for Rs. 1,121 crore for land acquisition for 18 works to be executed in 3 stages under the Chennai Traffic Decongestion Plan with financial assistance from the New Development Bank. Land acquisition works are apace.

Over/Under Bridges at Railway level crossings: Railway level crossings have become a big hindrance due to the explosion of vehicle population. Railway over/under bridges are constructed to avert accidents and reduce time wastage. In earlier regimes, construction of bridges took 7 years, on an average. At present, this has been reduced to 5 years through holding co-ordinated meetings with the Departments concerned and conducting joint survey for removing hurdles in the execution of works. From 2011 till now, 94 railway over bridges have been constructed and thrown open for public use. Works on 3 railway over bridges –Salem Lee-Bazar, Ariyalur and Jolarpet – are about to be completed.

Performance Based Maintenance Contract: All state highways and important District roads in a Division are maintained under the Performance Based Maintenance Contract (PBMC) for a period of 5 years. Started in Pollachi Division in 2012-2013, this scheme has been extended and 3,664 kms long state highways and important District roads in the Divisions of Krishnagiri, Ramanathapuram, Tiruvallur, Virudhungar, Palani and Sivagangai are being upgraded at a cost of Rs.3,556 crore. Under this scheme, 834 km long state highways

and important district roads in Thanjavur division are to be upgraded at cost of Rs.1,947 crore.

Our roads are in an excellent condition as vigilance is exercised at all stages – planning, fund allotment, commencement of works and execution in an expert manner.

Highways Research Station: Interactions and training programmes are arranged for engineers to have a grasp of new technologies for upgrading the performance of the highways Department. So far, 12,361 persons have participated in such interactions and benefited by participating in 277 lectures on technology and in 63 training programmes. In the current year, 52 engineers have been trained in quality control and 114 engineers in road safety audit. The training centre has been constructed on 4,150 sq.metre area. There is a separate hostel with 40 rooms for trainees to stay.

Chennai-Kanniyakumari Industrial Corridor Programme (CKICP): Fifteen State highways, running to a length of 590 km are to be upgraded at a cost of Rs.6,448 crore. Of this amount, Rs.4,383 crore will be spent on construction works and Rs.1,574 crore on acquiring 463 hectares of land.

Chennai Peripheral Ring Road (CPRR): To avert heavy vehicles entering Chennai city limits, a 133 km long Chennai Peripheral Ring road is proposed to be laid from Ennore Port to Poonjeri in the south. Of this length, 97 km will be new roads and 36 km upgraded existing roads. The entire road project will be executed in 5 phases. Land acquisition for the phases 1, 2, 3, and 5 is in progress. Construction work on the first phase is to be started at a cost of Rs. 2,473.70 crore with assistance from Japan International Co-operation Agency (JICA). Construction work in phase 2 and 3 will be taken up with assistance from Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank.

Tamil Nadu Road Sector Project-II (TNRSP-II): Under the EPC programme (Engineering, Procurement and Construction), 427 km long roads have been taken up as 10 cluster works at a cost of Rs.1,705 crore. Construction works in 9 clusters have been completed. Maintenance works for 5 years have been taken up. Tender has been floated for upgrading the Virdhachalam - Parangipettai road. The 70 km long Oddanchatram-Darapuram-Tiruppur road work is progressing under the Private-Public Participation (PPP) mode. The remaining 2 works are in the stage of entering contracts.

Tamil Nadu road Development Company (TNRDC): Road works in stage I and stage II of Chennai Outer Ring road, covering a length of 59.55 km, have been completed. After the disposal of the court case, the remaining 300 metre long road work is now in progress. The by-pass road for Kelambakkam and Thiruporur area is being laid at a cost of Rs.243.70 crore.

Tamil Nadu Road Infrastructure Development Corporation (TNRIDC): Widening the 33.40 km long Vandalur-Walajabad road from four lane to six lane traffic and upgrading it at a cost of Rs.378.90 crore under the Oragadam Industrial Park Road Construction Scheme is in progress. It is planned to complete this work before the end of 2020.

Tamil Nadu Maritime Board: It is planned to complete the Cuddalore Port Development

works at a cost of Rs.135 crore under the Central Government's Sagarmala/Inland Goods Landing Scheme before the end of 2020. The boat jetty at Vivekananda rock, Kanniyakumari Port is proposed to be extended at a cost of Rs.20 crore; the Tamil Nadu Maritime Board proposes to set up a 140 metre-long foot bridge, linking Vivekananda Rock Memorial and Ayyan Thiruvalluvar statue rock in Kanniyakumari for VIP visits.

Poompuhar Shipping Corporation: In the two years 2017-2018 and 2018-2019, 400 lakh metric tonnes of coal were moved from northern ports and of them 393.87 lakh metric tonnes of coal were taken to thermal power plants. A target of 260 lakh metric tonnes has been fixed for the year 2019-20 for movement of coal to thermal power plants. In the two years 2017 to 2019, a total of 41.60 lakh tourists had undertaken boat rides through the Kanniyakumari boat jetty. This fetched a revenue of Rs.17.88 crore. For the year 2019-2020, a target to facilitate boat riding for 20.37 lakh tourists has been fixed.

PWD – Water Resources Department:

Water is nectar to humanity. Life started in water. We cannot produce even a drop of water.

Thiruvalluvar has stated: 'Water is the agent for external cleanliness' (Puranthooymai Neeraan Amaiyum).

There are places in the world where people have to trek for a mile to get a drop of water. There are countries which have to break rocks to get little quantities of water.

Generally, there will be no poverty in a country blessed with water resources; no enmity will be there. Crops will flourish; fields will sway in the breeze; rivers will gush forth; tanks will be full; wells will spring up; lakes will overflow; fish will gambol; and people will flourish.

This is what the venerable Tamil minstrel Avvaiyar sang: 'Varappuyara neer uyarum, neer uyara nel uyarum, nel uyara kudi uyarum, kudi uyara koal uyarum,koal uyara koan uyarvaan'. ("if the field bund is heightened, water level in it will raise and in turn paddy production will rise, people will flourish, standard of governance will go up and ultimately the king's esteem will rise high").

In countries where rain is bountiful, agriculture will flourish, a healthy environment will develop and there will be not be the disease of hunger. Thiruvalluvar mentions this while defining how a country should be - 'Urupasiyum Ova piniyum seru pagaiyum serathiyalvadhu naadu'. He describes hunger as a disease. His declaration is that rain, Nature's gift, is on par with nectar as it sustains the entire creation. The Water Resources Department is proud to serve society by dealing with water, which is the pulse and life support of all living beings. Planning the quantum and quality of the appropriate usage of water resources, their development, apportioning and administering them, is water resources management. The PWD-Water Resources Department is taking all efforts to protect and use in an appropriate way the available water resources by undertaking the best water management measures.

Important Schemes/Works executed by this Department:

1. Athikadavu-Avinashi Scheme – A dream scheme for many years, works on it are now

in progress today after Hon'ble Amma's Government gave administrative approval for its execution at a cost of Rs.1,652 crore.

2. Works are in progress to set up a new water regulator in Coleroon river, below Mukkombu, Tiruchirapalli and in strengthening the existing one. It is planned to complete the works by March 2021.

3. On 04.03.2020, I inaugurated the scheme to divert through pumping the surplus flood waters of Mettur dam to the dry lakes in Sarabanga basin. The scheme aims at filling up 100 dry lakes in 8 Panchayat Unions in Salem District, thereby recharging the ground water table, meeting the drinking water needs of the people of those areas and providing irrigation facilities to 4,238 acres of land. When the scheme is implemented fully, thousands more acres of land will get irrigation facility; the area will turn green; agriculturists in hamlets will be satisfied; employment opportunities will increase in Villages; ground water will rise and Tamil Nadu will flourish.

4. Construction of a barrage with a head sluices across Coleroon river in the villages of Adhanur and Kumaramangalam in the Districts of Cuddalore and Nagapattinam, is progressing.

5. Ninety per cent of works in Part I and Part II of the Tambiraparani-Karumeniyar-Nambiyar rivers link scheme, have been completed. Works in Part III are in progress; sanction is to be accorded shortly for undertaking works in Part IV of the scheme.

6. The scheme to extend, renovate and modernize the irrigation structures in Cauvery is to be taken up for execution. The work will be divided into 15 heads and executed.

7. Government is taking steps to resume the works on 'kudimaramathu', 'special dredging in Cauvery Delta' and 'Nadanthaai Vaazhi Cauvery Schemes.

8. With World Bank aid, the PWD-Water Resources Department is taking up many excellent schemes like national hydrology project and renovation and development of dams. The Union Government lauded the excellent implementation of the Dam Renovation and Development scheme and presented the Central Board of Irrigation and Power Award to the Tamil Nadu PWD-Water Resources Department.

9. Restoration works on Chennai Rivers - The Water Resources Department is functioning as an executive wing in the Adyar-Cooum Rivers Restoration Committee, set up by the Chennai Rivers Restoration Trust. Restoration works for a length of 27 km from Paruthipattu dam to the Cooum river bar mouth, being implemented in 9 stages at a total cost of Rs. 93 crore, are about to be completed.

Water Resources – Surface Water Resource: The 34 big rivers in the State have been categorized as 17 river basins and 127 sub-basins. Natural rain fall in the State is 911.60 mm. Total surface water resources, inclusive of the 249 tmc ft. of water, obtained from neighbouring States as per inter-state agreements, is 885 tmc ft. water.

Ground Water Resources - The Water Resources Department is continuously monitoring the quantum and the quality of ground water resource. On the basis of micro-testing of ground water, 462 firkas out of the 1,166 firkas in the State have been classified

as over exploited firkas, 79 as critical, 163 as moderately critical, 35 as saline and 427 as safe firkas.

To protect, store and develop the ground water resources in the State, structures like check dams, bed-level dams, diaphragm walls, ground water shafts and percolation ponds are being set up.

Administrative set up: On the basis of river basins, the Water Resources Department of the Public Works Department is functioning as 4 zonal units. The Chief Engineer, heading each zone, functions as the top executive for the river basins in his jurisdiction. Besides, there are 7 executive divisions and 4 special set ups to attend to the works of the Water Resources Department. The Boilers Directorate issues certificates after monitoring the boilers in factories.

Kudimaramathu works: Hon'ble Amma's Government started implementing the 'kudimaramathu' works to restore water bodies with the help of beneficiaries, from the year 2016-2017 for managing the water resources. Through the implementation of this scheme, the ground water level raised and the area of cultivation increased; society's participation in the maintenance of water bodies got rejuvenated. `Kudimaramathu' works are assigned to agriculturists associations/irrigation sabhas/ ayacutdars or a committee of ayacutdars, on nomination basis.

To implement these works in an effective way, guideline hand books have been distributed to farmers. A committee of IAS officers has been set up to monitor the 'kudimaramathu' works and dredging works in delta areas. As works were taken up in time and in an effective way, water reached the tail-end areas of the delta region very quickly in 2019-2020, benefiting farmers.

In 2020-2021, 1,364 'kudimaramathu' works are to be taken up in 34 Districts for execution at a cost of Rs.500 crore. Without any slackness, this Government is de-silting thousands of lakes all over Tamil Nadu. On account of our works of raising the bunds and improving the capacity of water bodies, our State continues to heap innumerable awards in agriculture production.

Construction of new check dams/ barrages: To meet the irrigation and drinking water needs, a 3- year plan has been framed to construct structures like check dams, diaphragm walls and anaicuts across rivers and Odais at a cost of Rs.1,000 crore to store water and in the last 3 years, 133 works, valued at Rs.692.55 crore have been taken up.

As structures like check dams and retaining walls have been constructed in many places, water draining in sea has been stopped resulting in the rise of ground water table. People are happy; newspapers have applauded. In a like manner, a survey is on to construct check dams and barrages in the big rivers, Cauvery and Coleroon, to augment water resources by preventing the surplus flood waters during the times of floods from draining into the sea.

PWD-Water Resources Department's role in meeting the Chennai city's drinking water needs: Ninety seven per cent of the works on the Thervoy Kandigai Reservoir with a storage capacity of one tmc ft. of water, have been completed and the reservoir is to be brought to use in the current year to complement the

supply of water from the existing reservoirs for meeting the needs of Greater Chennai. Also, Hon'ble Minister for Fisheries Thiru. D. Jayakumar and Hon'ble Minister for Rural Development and Municipal Administration Thiru. S.P. Velumani met the Andhra Chief Minister and presented my letter, requesting the release of Krishna river water for the drinking water needs of Chennai. Following this, on the orders of the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh, 6.6. tmc ft. of water has been released and received till now for Chennai drinking water needs. I thank the Hon'ble Andhra Chief Minister for this. Steps are also taken to protect and restore the environment along the water bodies.

In that way, administrative sanction has been given for restoration, in the current year, of Chitlapakkam lake in Tambaram Taluk, Chengalpattu District, Bhavani Odathurai lake in Erode District and the lakes in Adambakkam, Perumbakkam and Vengaivasal in Chengalpattu District at a cost of Rs.12 crore. Works are to commence shortly.

Inter-State River Disputes: Cauvery river water – This House knows the publication of the Cauvery River Water Disputes Tribunal's final verdict in the Central Government's Gazette on 19.02.2013 following the serial court battles waged by Hon'be Amma. The consistent efforts of Tamil Nadu Government and as a result of its court battle, the Cauvery Management Board and the Cauvery Water Regulation committee were set up as recommended in the Tribunal's final order. This Authority has held 5 meetings. The Regulation committee has met 26 times. In these meetings Tamil Nadu Government's view have been forcefully conveyed.

The Karnataka Government's proposed Dam at Mekadatu: Hon'ble Amma's Government is always firm in protecting the interests of farmers in Tamil Nadu. All steps are being taken to prevent Karnataka Government's efforts from constructing a dam at Mekedatu or at any other place in contravention of the final order of the Cauvery water Tribunal and the judgment of the Supreme Court and to safeguard Tamil Nadu's rights.

Meeting with Kerala Chief Minister on 25.09.2019 regarding river waters and subsequent action:

1. Review of agreement on Parambikulam-Aliyar Project – The Tamil Nadu Government designed, with the consent of Kerala Government in the Second Five Year Plan, the Parambikulam-Aliyar Project for the utilization of the water in 8 west flowing rivers passing through mountainous region –Anaimalaiyaru, Neeraru, Solaiyaru, Parambikulam and its tributaries Peruvaripallam and Thoonakkadavu and the rivers Aliyar and Palaru running on the plains. An agreement was entered into between the Governments of Kerala and Tamil Nadu on 29.05.1970, pre-dated as 09.11.1958 for the use of the waters of the above mentioned rivers by the two States for electricity generation, irrigation, supply of drinking water, industrial consumption and other utilities. The project benefits the Taluks of Pollachi, Palladam, Udumalpet and Dharapuram in the Districts of Coimbatore and Tiruppur. On the side of the Kerala State, the Districts of Palakad and Thiruchur benefit. As per the agreement, it has to be reviewed once in every 30 years. Accordingly, it was taken up for review on 09.11.1988 and both the

States exchanged the documents for review on 21.09.1989. Several rounds of talks took place at the levels of Ministers and officials.

To protect the interests of Tamil Nadu farmers, increase drinking water resources to many Districts and find a solution to un-resolved issues with Kerala, I met the Chief Minister of Kerala at Thiruvananthapuram on 25.09.2019 and participated in the talks. Important scheme works like review of Parambikulam-Azhiyar agreement, diversion of 2.5 tmc ft.of water from Anaimalai river to Tamil Nadu as per the agreement, setting up of a balancing reservoir on the western side of Manakadavu, multi-purpose direct link of Neeraru-Nallaru rivers, Pandiyaru-Punnampuzha scheme, resumption of water supply to Neyyaru irrigation and restoration of Shenbagavalli dam, were discussed at the meet.

As per the decision taken at the meeting, each State set up two 5-member committees for reviewing the agreement on Parambikulam-Aliyar Project and to examine the Pandiyar-Punnampuzha scheme. The first meeting of the two committees, concerned with the Parambikulam-Aliyar Project was held at Chennai on 12.12.2019. The two committees are headed by the Principal Secretaries of the two states. Steps were taken for holding further talks for reaching smooth decisions.

Linking of Mahanadi-Godavari-Krishna-Pennaru-Palaru-Cauvery- Vaigai-Gundaru rivers: Tamil Nadu continues to stress the Central Government and the Special committee, it set up as per the Supreme Court's judgment given on 27.02.2012, for linking the peninsular rivers Mahanadi-Godavari-Krishna-Pennaru-Palaru-Cauvery-Vaigai-Gundaru as also Pamba-Achankovil-Vaipparu. It has further been requested to allot more water to Tamil Nadu as it is a water deficit state and that the link canal from the Andhra-Tamil Nadu border be taken on an elevated plane and joined at the Kattalai barrage instead of in Cauvery at Grand Anaicut as that will facilitate supply of water to needed places and in conveying water to Vaigai-Gundaru. Also, in a letter dated 19.12.2019 to the Hon'ble Prime Minister, the request to advise the concerned Departments to expedite and complete the detailed project

report for Godavari-Cauvery river link, has been reiterated.

In the meanwhile, the Central Government sent to the concerned states the detailed draft project report for the Godavari – (Eechampalli/ Janampet) – Cauvery (Grand Anaicut) link and sought their views. I have not only urged the Chief Ministers of Andhra and Telengana to extend their co-operation for this project but sent a team of Ministers and officials and it met the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Andhra on 04.03.2020 and the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Telengana on 05.03.2020 and presented Tamil Nadu's request. Both the Chief Ministers have stated that they will examine the request.

Hon'ble Prime Minister and the Union Minister for Jal Shakti have been requested to allot to Tamil Nadu, a minimum of 200 tmc ft of water from Godavari and when the Mahanadi-Godavari link materializes to increase the quantum of water diverted to Tamil Nadu to 300 tmc ft. water and that the detailed project report, be prepared quickly and the scheme implemented on a priority basis.

Linking of intra-State rivers – Cauvery-Agniyar-South Vellaru-Manimutharu-Vaigai-Gundaru Link Canal Scheme.

Administrative sanction is to be given shortly for setting up a link canal for this scheme of connecting intra-State rivers at a cost of Rs.7,677 crore. To execute the phase I of this scheme, about 1,321.68 acres of patta land and 346.69 acres of poramboke land have to be acquired from Kattalai barrage to South Vellaru. This land acquisition will roughly cost Rs.1, 486.89 crore. In this year's budget, Rs.700 crore has been allotted.

Linking of Pennaiyaru (Sathanur Dam) - Cheyyaru rivers.: Administrative sanction has been given for Rs.35 lakh for taking detailed land and level measurements. These works, needed for the preparation of detailed project report, are about to be completed.

Linking of Pennaiyaru-Palaru rivers: Steps are being taken for preparing an evaluation report on environmental impact for this scheme.

Tamil Nadu Water Resources Development Committee: A Water Resources Development Committee, headed by a retired Chief Engineer and comprising 5 retired engineers was set up on 15.05.2018 to execute many schemes like retrieving water resources, improving storage capacity and enriching the water resources in the State after surveying the whole of Tamil Nadu.

A new organization -Tamil Nadu Water Resources Conservation and Rivers Restoration Corporation – headed by an IAS officer has come into existence from 25.12.2019. To improve the water resources and the storage capacity of water bodies, the committee has been submitting to Government many detailed project reports and estimates for conserving monsoon rain water effectively and to prevent sea water incursion and pollution of ground water. These reports are examined and approval is given to the most beneficial schemes. I wish to mention a few of them that have come up to the stage of implementation.

A Rs.62.36 crore scheme to improve the storage capacity of the twin lakes at Kattur and Thattamanji in Ponneri Taluk, Tiruvallur District for developing a new reservoir and to control the incursion of sea water is to be implemented.

This will conserve 700 mcft. of water (0.7 tmc ft.). This will help fulfill the drinking water needs of North Chennai.

Administrative sanction has been given for a Rs.161 crore scheme for retrieving the Kazhuveli lake in Marakkanam Taluk, Villupuram District for setting up a reservoir and for controlling sea water incursion. Through this scheme, 4 tmc ft water can be saved from going waste into the sea.

Administrative approval has been given for setting up structures for artificial recharge of ground water at a cost of Rs.48.46 crore in Thanjavur District and at a cost of Rs.11.74 crore in Tiruvarur District.

M-sand usage in the place of river sand: As a substitute to river sand, M-Sand (C.S. Sand-crushed stone sand) is used in construction works. It has been declared that M-Sand, manufactured by crushing strong stones through appropriate machines as per ISI rules, can be used in construction works. A handbook has been produced to create awareness among people for using quality M-Sand and also a documentary which has been released in theatres. Information about M-Sand has been published in newspapers also and now people have started using this commodity.

Public Works (Buildings): The Public Works Department does not stop with water resources dams. It has the honour of constructing buildings like forts. Our PWD engineers dedicate themselves to the construction of buildings like District Collectorates, schools, Government offices, training centres and Government hostels. Through the building wing of the PWD, the building needs of Government's 32 Departments are carried out in an aesthetic manner and with modern technology. It also undertakes renovation of old buildings, preserving their originality for protecting them. The construction of Hon'ble Puratchi Thalaivi Amma's memorial on a gigantic scale and with a striking design to win the admiration of all, is nearing completion. When Tamil Nadu has already earned the honour of getting permission for starting 11 medical colleges in one year, the PWD (Building) is ready to construct buildings for those medical colleges in a marvellous way and with modern facilities. It is also ready to create District Collectorate complexes for the newly created Districts.

As for Tamil Nadu, we depend on neighbouring States and Nature for water. We don't have any perennial rivers. In this situation, the Tamil Nadu Government is conserving every drop of water in water bodies and is using it. Our lakes and tanks are hundis to save water. Considering rain water as nectar, we are conserving it. We are facing the deficit in river waters with the sweat of our efforts, by constructing check dams, recharging ground water table, storing rain water, setting up percolation ponds and conveying the run off waters in rivers to lakes. Our farmers too don't waste even a drop of water and harvest their produce through proper utilization of water.

Through reservoirs, we supply drinking water round-the-year to nearby habitations. I consider myself as just a servant in the service of people in this land rather than as the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu. I was born in a farmer's family and grew up, understanding their difficulties. And as such, today, I serve

those farmers heartily as a son in a tiller's household.

More than the pride I felt while travelling in a car, my happiness found no bounds when I mounted a farmer's bullock cart and drove it to participate in a farmers' meeting held at Tiruvarur.

The challenges and achievements in one's life are memorable. Many such memorable events have taken place in my public life. I started in Edappadi Assembly constituency in 1989 as a student of Hon'ble Amma. But there is only one event that is uppermost in my mind today that gives me immense happiness. Countless draft Bills have been moved in this House. They have blossomed into Law with the great support of the members of this House. Till now, I have not moved any draft bill. The only draft bill I moved in this House is declaration of Cauvery delta as protected agriculture zone, a historic bill. That was passed into an Act with overwhelming support. I am extremely happy that I, born in a farmer's family, could move this bill and get it enacted. I consider this as a great fortune in my life. I dedicate my heartfelt gratitude to Providence, God and Hon'ble Amma for having given me such an opportunity and I bow to them.

Scarcity is a challenge to administration. When it reaches the level of 'surplus', it turns into an achievement - 'savaale samali' (to meet the challenge).

Immediately after assuming office as Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu in 2011, the promise Puratchi Thalaivi Amma gave to people of Tamil Nadu was to turn Tamil Nadu into a Power Surplus State after completely wiping out the prevailing power cut lasting for several hours. She carried out what she stated. She even banished the word 'power cut' from the boundaries of Tamil Nadu. In a similar way, the aim of this Government that treads carefully on the magnificent political path of that super intelligent Mother, is to turn Tamil Nadu into a water surplus state. That is also my aim. I affectionately solicit the support of all, going beyond politics, to all my efforts to achieve it.

Department of Highways and Minor Ports: 2020-2021 Announcements.

1. Subway works for vehicles and those for road junction development and road safety, will be undertaken on global standards at a cost of Rs.531 crore in the stretch from Sriperumbudur to Singaperumalkoil, the fourth sector of Chennai boundary road.

2. The 14.8 km long Siruseri-Mahabalipuram road will be upgraded into 6-lane traffic road with service roads at a cost of Rs.350 crore.

3. Upgrading works will be undertaken in roads linking industries in Hosur,Tiruppur, Erode and Karur to a stretch of 158 km at a cost of Rs.361 crore.

4. To avert stagnation of rain water on roads on account of flooding in Greater Chennai and suburbs, new drainage and culverts will be constructed at a cost of Rs.277 crore.

5. To improve the infrastructure in 12 roads that join the Chennai Outer ring road, land acquisition works through land pooling method, will be undertaken in the first phase.

6. A detailed project report will be prepared for laying 9 by-pass roads in 7 Districts.

7. Construction of flyovers to reduce traffic congestion in the cities of Tiruchi, Madurai and Coimbatore and to improve roads in the Districts of Madurai and Theni, a detailed project report will be prepared at a cost of Rs.3.25 crore.

8. Land acquisition will be undertaken to lay a by-pass road for Jalakandapuram.

9. To construct 20 railway over-bridges in 11 Districts, a detailed project report will be prepared at a cost of Rs.7.44 crore.

10. A detailed project report will be prepared at a cost of Rs. 5.19 crore for constructing 12 river bridges in 9 Districts.

11. Five over-bridges will be constructed at a cost of Rs.500 crore at 5 important road junctions on the Information Technology Expressway, Chennai.

12. A detailed project report will be prepared at a cost of Rs.9.10 crore to upgrade 3 main roads in Chennai city into excellent roads and a feasibility report at a cost of Rs.38 lakh for laying alternative roads, one from Muthuswamy Bridge, Anna Salai to Tambaram and another from Tambaram to Sriperumbudur. Also, a pedestrian foot over-bridge will be constructed at the Vandalur junction at a cost of Rs.16.17 crore.

13. Eleven office buildings for the Highways Department will be constructed at an estimate of Rs. 5 crore.

14. Twenty road sweeper machines will be procured at a cost of Rs.16 crore for cleaning the Highways in 12 Municipal Corporation areas.

15. State highways and important district roads to a length of 109 km will be upgraded, with World Bank aid, at a cost of Rs.1,500 crore.

16. In 18 Districts, river bridges will be constructed on Government and Panchayat union roads at a cost of Rs.310 crore.

17. Road safety works will be undertaken at a cost of Rs. 400 crore.

18. A detailed feasibility report will be prepared at a cost of Rs. One crore for dredging the Pamban canal to a depth of 10 metres for the transit of small and medium size ships.

Public Works Department 2020-2021 announcements:

1. Setting up a new regulator near the Lower Dam across the Coleroon river near Anaikkarai, will be taken up at a cost of Rs.650 crore.

2. Pumping schemes for irrigation will be taken up in 5 Districts at a cost of Rs.486.50 crore.

3. Restoration of Madurantakam, Perumal, Walajah and Madhavaram lakes and renovation of their structures will be undertaken at a cost of Rs.302.90 crore.

4. Construction of check dams, dams, bed level dams and diaphragm wall will be undertaken at 77 places in 28 Districts at a cost of Rs.585.18 crore.

5. In Thoothukkudi and Nagapattinam Districts, setting up of new regulators and tail-end check dams at 3 places will be undertaken at a cost of Rs.87 crore.

6. Construction of new canals in Krishnagiri and Pudukkottai Districts and a new bridge

in Ariyalur District will be undertaken at an estimate of Rs.63.75 crore.

7. Repairing, renovating, modernizing and upgrading irrigation structures at 40 places in 15 Districts will be undertaken at a cost of Rs.834.83 crore.

8. Renovation of 2 Dam structures in the Districts of Villupuram and Tiruvannamalai and increasing their storage capacity at a cost of Rs.57.25 crore will be taken up.

9. Restoration of urban lakes at 9 places in 5 districts will be taken up at a cost of Rs.47.25 crore .

10. In the Districts of Nagapattinam, Thoothukkudi and Kanniyakumari, construction of retaining walls and groyne will be taken up at a cost of Rs. 42 crore.

11. Re-structuring of irrigation structures in the districts of Kanniyakumari, Tirunelveli and Tiruchi will be undertaken at a cost of Rs.26.49 crore.

12. Sprucing up the parks in the complex of reservoirs and dams in 10 Districts and renovating their infrastructure will be undertaken at a cost of Rs.35 crore.

13. An allotment of Rs.1.85 crore will be made to undertake a survey for 12 new irrigation schemes in 9 Districts.

14. Developing the infrastructure in Water Resources Department in PWD and purchase of new equipment and jeeps will be undertaken at a cost of Rs.20.84 crore.

15. For building design offices, computers, software and equipment will be supplied at a cost of Rs.3.40 crore.

16. A quality control laboratory building and a lecture hall at the employees training centre in the PWD and office buildings for Salem and Nagapattinam divisions and for 4 sub-divisions will be constructed at a cost of Rs.13.50 crore.

17. For quality control and medical services sub-divisions, new jeeps will be procured at a cost of Rs.2 crore.

18. Construction of additional Government tourist bungalows at Vedaranyam, Nagapattinam, Mayiladuthurai and Theni will be undertaken at a cost of Rs.10.35 crore; a residential building at Thoothukudi for executive engineer and special ‘maramathu’ works in the quarters of the employees of PWD, Chennai will be undertaken at a cost of Rs. 96 lakh.

19. Rs. One crore will be allotted for providing modern technological training and field training abroad to engineers and architects of the building wing of the Public Works Department.

20. Developing infrastructure facilities in Ezhilagam and Chepauk Government office complex and improving the audio system in the Legislature Hall will be undertaken at a cost of Rs.7.09 crore.

Hon'ble Chief Minister lays stone for Dindigul Government Medical College

Speech of the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu
Thiru. Edappadi K. Palaniswami
at the foundation laying ceremony for the Dindigul Government Medical college on 14.03.2020. *(English Translation)*

Hon'ble Deputy Chief Minister Thiru. O. Panneerselvam who has delivered an excellent presidential address at this event organized to lay the foundation stone for a new Government medical college in Dindigul District, start new scheme works, inaugurate completed scheme works and distribute Government Welfare assistance, son of the soil of this district and Hon'ble Minister for Forest Thiru. Dindigul Sreenivasan who has put forth excellent ideas wrapped in humour and made us think, Hon'ble Minister for Health and Family Welfare Dr C.Vijayabaskar, who helped me in getting this medical college, and through his swift action brought it to this stage of laying the foundation stone through his repeated meetings with the Central Government, Hon'ble Ministers, Hon'ble Deputy Speaker of the Legislative Assembly Thiru. Pollachi V.Jayaraman, Chairperson of Tamil Nadu Textbook and Educational Services Corporation Tmt. B.Valarmathi, Hon'ble Chairman of Tamil Nadu Housing Board and former MLA Thiru. P.K. Vairamuthu, MLAs of Dindigul District, former Deputy Speaker of Lok Sabha and former Minister Respected Thiru. Thambi Durai, former Minister Thiru. Natham Viswanathan, Member of Parliament, Theni Thiru.Ravindranath, former Ministers, former MPs and MLAs, District Collector Tmt.M.Vijayalakshmi who is to propose a vote of thanks, Representatives of Local Bodies, Executives of Co-operatives, Party Executives,

Elders, Ladies, Farmers, Farm labourers, Newspaper and Media Friends - at the outset, I convey my respects to all of you.

It was Hon'ble Puratchi Thalaivar M.G.R. who created Dindigul District out of Madurai District on Perarignar Anna's birth anniversary in 1985.

Dindigul is historically a great District, known for its courage, sacrifice and philanthropy. The Sangam literary work Purananuru says that Bekan, one of the seven 'vallals' of yore, who covered a peacock, shivering from cold, with his silk 'peethambaram', lived in this District; this land also gave birth to freedom fighters and 'tyagis' like Thiru.Subramania Siva and Virupatchi Gopal Naicker. The Dindigul Fort was built by Muthu Krishnappa Naicker of the Madurai Nayak dynasty. The whole Dindigul town can be seen from any part of the Fort, situated atop the Dindigul hill at a height of 900 feet. The double-walled fort is strong enough to take on the fire power of heavy artillery cannons. Many had tried to capture this fort, like the Vijayanagar kings, Nayaks, Mysore Kings and the British. History says Rani Veeramangai Velu Nachiyar of Sivagangai stayed in this fort for 8 years after battling the British heroically.

This District is replete with places of worship of all religions. All of them foster communal harmony. The greatness of Dindigul can be attributed to the manufacture of a variety of locks. So much so, one is tempted to think that Hon'ble Puratchi Thalaivar M.G.R. sang 'Pala pala pala, pala ragamaa irukkuthu poottu' (There are locks here of different varieties), keeping, perhaps, Dindigul in mind. When the word 'lock' is uttered, only Dindigul comes to one's mind. It is such a famous District that I am laying the foundation.

About 3,500 small and micro industrial sheds and more than 50 industries function in this District. It abounds in spinning mills, providing a lot of jobs. Nature surrounds this region. The cool region of Kodaikanal is in this District. There is no paucity of schools, arts and science colleges and engineering colleges in this great District.

Hon'ble Amma's Government which gives priority to people's welfare, based on the dictum 'Makkal sevaiye mahesan sevai' (Service to people is service to God), acceded to the demand of the people in this region and obtained a Central Government order for the setting up of a new Government medical college in this District.

The only Government – a Government of achievements – which got the Central Government's permission, I am proud to say here, to start 11 Government medical colleges, inclusive of the one in this District, in the same year, is Hon'ble Amma's Government. This Government medical college for which foundation is laid today, will enroll 150 students from the academic year 2021-2022. This college is to be set up jointly by the Central and State Governments at a cost of Rs. 327 crore. Hon'ble Amma's Government has appointed a Principal and a special officer for this college for starting the preliminary works and has issued orders allotting Rs.100 crore in the first phase for construction works. I have issued orders for speedy completion of these works.

Mahakavi Bharathiyar pleads for a healthy and agile body, –"Visaiyuru panthinaippol, ullam vendiyapadi selum udal ketten" (`I sought a body, swift like a ball in motion, to carry out the mind's diktats').

Only through the wealth of a healthy life, other types of wealth inclusive of intelligence can be easily gained. That is why Hon'ble Amma's Government took many steps to safeguard the health of the people of Tamil Nadu and it has succeeded in it. Further, Tamil Nadu remains a model State in all spheres including child-mother care and prevention and control of contagious and non-contagious diseases. Hon'ble Amma's Government has started implementing through the Department of Health and with financial assistance from World Bank, the Rs.2,857 crore Tamil Nadu Health System Reform Programme for upgrading the quality of treatment given in Government hospitals, particularly in the strengthening of the management of the prevention of non-contagious diseases and the provision of child-mother care services for all without any discrimination. Hon'ble Amma's Government is implementing many schemes to improve health services and to ensure that their benefits reach the people. I wish to mention a few of them here.

✶ Under the Dr. Muthulakshmi Reddy Maternity Benefit Scheme, 'Amma Maternity Nutrition Kit', containing iron tonic and other nutrients and valued at Rs.4,000 is distributed to pregnant women to remedy their anaemic condition and improve the weight of the newborn. Our Government has introduced this scheme on the advice of doctors to prevent mortality in children born with low weight and has thus created a condition where healthy children are born with good weight.

✶ We continue to be in the premier place in the whole of India in human organ transplantation surgery. We have the honour of Tamil Nadu being the only state that has received the Central Government award for best performance in this surgery five times continuously. Hon'ble Amma's Government is the first ever in India to have accomplished a cadaver transplantation surgery of both hands to one Narayanaswami of Dindigul District. After this transplantation, he got married and has a child now. This transplantation surgery was undertaken after ascertaining its feasibility with the medical team by the Hon'ble Minister for Health and Family Welfare who was cautioned of the possibility of it getting politicized by the present Leader of Opposition, in the event of failure. So, you should all ponder over how the AIADMK Government is recording achievements in the medical field. I congratulate and thank the Hon'ble Minister for Health and Family Welfare Respected Dr C.Vijayabaskar and the Government doctors for this achievement.

✶ Hon'ble Amma's Government is successfully implementing many schemes like Amma Arogya Thittam, Amma Master Health Check Up scheme, Amma Baby Care Kits scheme and Chief Minister's Comprehensive Health Insurance Scheme.

In the past, poor people could get medical treatment in private hospitals under this scheme to an extent of Rs. 2 lakh. They said this amount was not enough and they had to shell out from their pockets as and when the medical expenses exceeded this ceiling and requested for a revision of this ceiling. On receipt of this request, Amma's Government increased it from Rs. 2 lakh to Rs. 5 lakh.

✶ The honour of having conducted Ponmana Chemmal Puratchi Thalaivar M.G.R.'s centenary in all the 32 Districts of Tamil Nadu to highlight his fame, goes to Amma's Government. When I came to Dindigul to participate in the centenary, I made many new announcements on the basis of the demands placed before me. I wish to mention that a few of them have been implemented.

✶ A new Primary Health Centre (PHC) has been set up in Ranganathapuram in Vedasandur Panchayat Union.

✶ An additional building has been constructed for the Nurses Training School at Dindigul Kasturba Hospital.

✶ A modern eye testing and treatment centre has been set up and is in operation at the Community Health Centre in Ammayanaickanur.

✶ C.T. Scan unit has been set up at Kodaikanal Government Hospital and is in use.

✶ Modern medical equipment has been supplied to the laboratory at Palani Government Hospital.

✶ Dialysis equipment has been supplied to Athur Government Hospital.

Apart from these, I wish to mention a few of the schemes implemented in this District by the Hon'ble Amma's Government in the last 3 years.

After I assumed office as Chief Minister, the Leader of the Opposition and other Opposition party men have launched a slanderous campaign all over Tamil Nadu, questioning the benefits that have accrued to people under this regime. To answer them and for the information of the people, I place before you the schemes implemented by the AIADMK Government for the benefit of the people.

• Under the 'kudimaramathu' scheme, 59 works have been carried out with the participation of farmers, inclusive of restoration of Odaiyakulam and Government supply channel in A.Kalayamputhur Village, Palani Taluk, strengthening of the bunds of Pulvetti Kanmai in Athur Village, repairing of sluices and removal of unwanted vegetation.

'Kudimaramathu' scheme is implemented with farmers total participation in an excellent manner to store monsoon rain water so that it does not wastefully drain into the sea. The Leader of the Opposition Thiru.Stalin is finding fault in this too. He is searching with a lens for any lapse on our part in any matter. However much he may try, he cannot find any such thing in the AIADMK's rule. We perform so as to benefit the people. Under the 'Kudimaramathu' scheme, 78 works are being carried out in this District alone at a cost of Rs. 44 crore.

❖ The purpose of Chief Minister's Special Grievance Redressal Scheme is to reverse the existing practice of people going to the Government to present their grievances for redressal, by making the Government to go to them. It is our Government that has resolved problems mentioned in thousands of petitions collected from this District, in just 3 months. Under this scheme, old age pension has been given to 1,612 senior citizens in Dindigul District alone in 3 months time. In deference to the requests of the Hon'ble Minister and Members of Legislature that a monthly pension of Rs.1,000 should be given to old, poor people, incapable of taking up any work, we made the announcement that pension would be given to 5 lakh persons. A total of 9,77,670 petitions were received from all over Tamil Nadu in 3 months. Of these, solutions have been found in the case of 5,22,660 eligible petitions. But the Opposition parties don't see it. I am saying all these things for people to know of our activities. It is our Government that has given pension to 2.50 lakh old people throughout the State in 3 months time.

❖ Under the scheme to distribute laptops to students at no cost, brought about by Hon'ble Idaya Deivam Puratchi Thalaivi Amma with a visionary outlook to enable them to have a scientific education, laptops worth Rs.12,000 each were distributed to 35,000 students in this District alone at no cost. Throughout Tamil Nadu, 51,67,019 laptops, valued at Rs.7,241 crore have been distributed so far. Neither super power countries nor other States in India have implemented such a scheme. We continue to execute this scheme launched by Amma.

❖ It is Amma's Government that has distributed a Pongal gift of Rs.1,000 each to all family card holders along with a Pongal kit containing rice, sugar, cardamom, cashew, raisins and sugarcane for the celebration of Pongal, the festival of Tamils. To block this distribution, many went to court but our Government, with the blessings of Idaya Deivam Puratchi Thalaivi Amma, got a favourable verdict and distributed the Pongal gift of Rs.1,000 each to all card holders.

This is a Government for the poor. Ponmana Chemmal Puratchi Thalaivar M.G.R. started the

AIADMK movement to provide innumerable plans for the uplift of the poor. Amma protected this movement even as the eyelid protects the eye and implemented many schemes for the poor. Amma's Government too continues to execute many schemes. You should think whether any other State in India has done like this.

✶ Under the Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Uzhavar Padugappu Thittam, a monthly pension of Rs.1,000 each has been distributed to 11,276 farmers in this District alone. It is Amma's Government which ensures that the benefits of such schemes fully reach the poor without any leakage. In this District alone, 35,000 persons are getting old-age pension.

✶ Two check dams across Kodagu river at Ayyampalayam and Agaram and 3 check dams across Santhanavardhini river have been constructed at an estimated cost of about Rs. 21 crore.

✶ Also, check dams have been constructed to replenish ground water table at Seevalsaragu in Athur Taluk, Virupachi (Oddanchatram Taluk), Mulaiyur (Natham), Konampatti (Nilakottai) and Mattumandhai (Palani).

✶ A railway over-bridge has been constructed between Dindigal and Akkaraipatti railway stations.

✶ A railway over-bridge, constructed at a cost of about Rs.26 crore at Anumantha Nagar, Dindigul has been thrown open for public use.

✶ Construction of a flyover on the Puliyampatti-Palaru road, at a cost of about Rs.6 crore has been completed.

✶ Rajavaikkaal at Narasingapuram has been restored at a cost of about Rs.10 crore and brought to farmers' use.

✶ Rajaneri canal in Natham Taluk has been restored at a cost of Rs.7.5 crore.

✶ Under the Natham Combined Water Supply Scheme, protected water supply is provided at an estimate of Rs.634 crore to 1,274 rural dwellings and to people in 3 town Panchayats.

✶ The Keeranur Combined Water Supply scheme works, being executed at an estimate of Rs.108 crore to benefit 253 rural dwellings and 2 town panchayats, are about to be completed. Shortly, they will be completed and people in this area will get protected drinking water.

✶ Works under the Vadamadurai Combined Water Supply Scheme in 20 rural dwellings, being executed at a cost of Rs.3.65 crore, are about to be completed; steps are taken to expedite the work.

✶ Under the phase II Cauvery Combined Water Supply Scheme, 155 villages in Vedasandur area have benefited.

✶ To provide more facilities to the public, a new office building has been constructed for the Dindigul Municipal Corporation at a cost of Rs. 5 crore.

✶ The Natham Bus Stand has been spruced up at a cost of about Rs. 5 crore and has been brought to the use of the general public.

- An administrative building has been constructed at a cost of about Rs. 3 crore in Palani Andavar Polytechnic college.
- Infrastructure facilities, costing about Rs. 8 crore have been provided at Mother Teresa Women's University, Kodaikanal.
- A new Revenue Taluk with Gujiliamparai as headquarters has been created for Government services to reach people quickly.
- A water supply development scheme has been executed for Dindigul Municipal Corporation at a cost of about Rs.70 crore.
- A new combined water supply scheme is being implemented to benefit 63 rural dwellings in Oddanchatram Panchayat Union, 84 rural dwellings in Vedasandur Panchayat Union and 38 rural dwellings in Reddiarchatram Union.

The famous Lord Muruga temple is situated in Palani in Dindigul District. To provide different facilities to this town like rectification of roads, drainage, street lights and purification of lakes and tanks, Amma's Government has allotted Rs. 58 crore and works on them have been started. After the completion of these works, Palani Murugan Temple will have all the facilities available at Tirupathi.

Besides these, I have inaugurated, in this function, 45 PWD works completed at a cost of Rs.14.02 crore inclusive of the construction of a check dam across Santhanavardhini river (Rs.4.27 crore); laid foundation for 5 works, inclusive of the one for this new medical college, costing Rs.340.86 crore and I will shortly distribute many kinds of welfare assistance valued at Rs.63.55 crore to 25,213 beneficiaries.

Idaya Deivam Puratchi Thalaivi Amma stated: "Tamil Nadu should be in the premier place in India in every sector; it should be the best in every field. This is my wish, plan and work. Towards this objective, the Government under my leadership is implementing new schemes in novel ways. I wish you should all participate in this journey of development. This is my request".

Hon'ble Amma's Government is providing relief in all natural disasters – drought, flood and cyclone. In droughts, Hon'ble Amma's Government provided a drought relief of Rs.2,247 crore to the affected farmers. In the last 3 years alone, it got farmers a compensation of Rs.7,702 crore through the crop insurance scheme. Through the micro irrigation scheme, Hon'ble Amma's Government gave a subsidy of Rs.1,080 crore in the last 3 years. When Fall Armyworm attacked the maize crops, Hon'ble Amma's Government gave a compensation of Rs.186.25 crore to the affected farmers. To prevent a recurrence of such an attack this year, pesticides valued at Rs.47.66 crore were sprayed at no cost in the maize fields and the pest was controlled. This boosted the yield and farmers got a higher income out of this crop.

We propose to set up a livestock park on a 1,100 acres area at a cost of Rs.1,000 crore near Thalaivasal in Salem District, the biggest in Asia. In this park, we propose to set up a veterinary college, a livestock research station

and produce indigenous breed bulls, cows and goats and cross-bred cows and distribute them to farmers. This will double farmers income as they will get higher milk yields and hefty goats.

Oddanchatram market is the most famous market in Dindigul District. We are setting up markets in different places to enable farmers get a good price for their vegetables and fruits. For this, we have selected 10 Districts and we are taking steps to set them up at a cost of about Rs.215 crore with Central Government's assistance.

To provide education to all rural children, we have upgraded primary schools into middle level schools, middle level schools into high schools and high schools into higher secondary schools and increased the enrolment of students in higher education by opening numerous colleges like medical, engineering and polytechnic colleges. When Amma took over the administration of the State in 2011, the enrolment in higher education was 34 per cent. This has now increased to 49.8 per cent on account of the revolution, renaissance brought about by Amma in the field of education, greater fund allocation for education and the steps taken in continuation by Amma's Government in Amma's path.

Today, Tamil Nadu occupies the premier place in higher education. This is a very great achievement. The State that stands foremost in education will flourish in all ways. To achieve this, we are implementing the schemes designed by Our Mother, Idaya Deivam Puratchi Thalaivi Amma without any deviation whatsoever. I wish to state that we have created the condition where Tamil Nadu stands ahead of all other States in education, by allotting more funds to school education and higher education.

Likewise, we are accomplishing in medical field also. To provide the best treatment to the poor, from Villages to cities, 254 new Primary Health Centres (PHC) have been opened. They have also been upgraded as 30- bed PHCs. Surgical facilities are also available there.

Only 1,945 seats were newly created in medical colleges in Tamil Nadu between 1947 when India attained Independence and 2011. After Idaya Deivam Puratchi Thalaivi Amma assumed responsibility of the State, 6 new medical colleges were started and she created a condition where 885 more students could study medicine. For more students to take up the study of medicine, Hon'ble Amma's Government requested the Central Government and got, last year, 350 additional seats. As Hon'ble Amma's Government that functions on the lines of Hon'ble Amma got permission for starting 11 new Government medical colleges in one year, 1,650 additional students can at present study medicine. So, in just one and a half years, Hon'ble Amma's Government has created 2,000 medical seats. This is historic. It is our Government that is accomplishing feats one after another like this.

For effective Government Administration, Amma's Government has created 5 new Districts. I am proud to say that we are implementing so many schemes.

It takes lakhs of rupees to get cured of cancer. Realizing the condition of poor people afflicted with cancer, Amma's Government has taken

steps to set up 10 numbers of linear accelerator equipment in Government medical college hospitals at a cost of Rs.200 crore at the rate of Rs.20 crore each. By creating such conditions for the diagnosis and cure of cancer, we have shown the extent to which this Government goes to save poor people.

Likewise, we have supplied to 5 Government hospitals PET CT Scan equipment to detect cancer, costing Rs.10 crore each. We have created facilities on par with private hospitals and more, in Government hospitals, whether it be PHC, District headquarters hospital or Government medical college hospitals. Recently, the Karur Government medical college hospital was declared open. It has more facilities than those available in private hospitals. I wish to state at this hour that the medical college hospital to be constructed in Dindigul District will be on the same lines.

Not only this. Amma's Government has made it possible to save poor people in Government hospitals also in the event of heart attack by supplying the hospitals cath lab equipment for undertaking coronary stent procedure. In the last 3 years, 24 CT Scan, 17 MRI Scan, 18 Cath Lab and 658 numbers of Dialysis equipment have been supplied to Government hospitals alone at a cost of Rs.221.11 crore. Through this, we have brought about a condition where poor people can get treated without paying any fee.

Opposition party men are saying that nothing has taken place in this regime. It is a stark lie. People should think – we have given so many projects. We are implementing excellent schemes for you. I am happy to state that Amma's Government that follows the path of Ponmana Chemmal Puratchi Thalaivar M.G.R. and Idaya Deivam Puratchi Thalaivi Amma, is implementing all the schemes to the full satisfaction of people.

In Tamil Nadu, 70 per cent of child births are taking place in Government hospitals. In Dindigul District, we have declared open a maternity hospital at a cost of Rs.20 crore. Women can make use of this hospital during their pregnancy. All medical vacancies are being filled up. Nearly 90 per cent of the vacant posts have been filled up. We have achieved the honour of being the State that gives the best medical treatment among all the States in India. No other State gives such treatment.

The Government spends people's tax money to set up every hospital. Hence, doctors should be service- minded, especially towards the poor.

'Deiva Pulavar' Thiruvalluvar said: 'What is the use of intelligence if one does not remove the sufferings of others considering them as one's own suffering' ('Arivinaan aaguvathu undo pirithin noy/thannoipoal pottrak kadai'). Students coming out as doctors from Government medical colleges after studying for a low fee, should serve the people with a spirit of service. This, I wish to point out, will be their requital of sorts to the Government.

The Government is considering many demands, beneficial to the people of this District. Hon'ble Minister Brother Thiru. Dindigual Sreenivasan, MLAs Tmt. Thenmozhi and Dr.Paramasivam here, have placed many

demands. All those demands are under Government's consideration.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

1. The Government is considering your demand for an indoor stadium at Dindigul M.V.M. Government Arts College for Women in Chettinaickenpatti Village.

2. Government is examining your request for a new office building for the Vadamadurai Panchayat Union.

3. So too under examination is your request for a new integrated complex for the Directorate of the Department of Rural Development and Panchayat.

4. The Government is also considering your request for a check dam from Palathu Odai to Muthu Palasamudram in Dasiripatti village, Oddanchatram Taluk.

5. Your request for a check dam across Santhanavardhini river in Mullipadi Village is also under Government's examination.

This Government is your Government; it is the people's Government; the only Government that understands the needs of people and fulfills them; and it is Amma's Government. Dindigul is the District where Ponmana Chemmal Puratchi Thalaivar M.G.R. first faced an election after starting the All India Anna DMK party. The party's symbol, 'Two Leaves', also made its debut in elections in this District only. AIADMK scored its first election victory under the 'Two Leaves' symbol by contesting the Dindigul Parliamentary election. It is Dindigul District that formed the base for the AIADMK party and the AIADMK Government. It is so because only after its victory here, AIADMK's fame spread all over Tamil Nadu. That victory of Ponmana Chemmal Puratchi Thalaivar M.G.R. was a great one. Dindigul is the District that proved Ponmana Chemmal Puratchi Thalaivar M.G.R.'s popularity among the people.

I thank Idaya Deivam Puratchi Thalaivi Amma for creating an opportunity for me to address this event in such a District. AIADMK is the only party that has been in administration for a total period of 30 years. No other party has a history of ruling Tamil Nadu for 30 years. It is the AIADMK party that has created such a history. This Government always serves the people; it is our Government that is tirelessly working for the development of the poor and oppressed people.

Coronavirus is now the talk of the world. Media says it has spread to 118 countries. Though this virus has not come to our region, we should be cautious. The Public Health Department is creating awareness through newspapers and media about it. Matters like how this disease strikes and what are its symptoms have all been clearly explained. If the symptoms are found, the affected persons can go to the nearby hospital and get treatment. As for Tamil Nadu, only one person has been found to be affected by the coronavirus. He is also recovering. Only persons who arrive from abroad are

having the symptoms of this virus. People in Tamil Nadu don't have it. Still, we should be cautious. Wherever we go, on return we have to thoroughly wash our hands with soap. Hon'ble Minister for Health says demonstrations have been arranged to show how the hands should be washed. All the people here should see these demonstrations before going. When you return home, clean your hands thoroughly before entering the house.

You should follow all these things. When the virus is said to be spreading throughout the country, we should exercise caution. I wish to emphasize repeatedly that there can be total cure if one rushes to a nearby hospital and gest treated properly once the symptoms become visible.

Respected elder brother Thiru.Dindigal Sreenivasan is a senior Minister in our Cabinet. He has a good sense of humour and if he sees me exhausted, he diverts my mind with his witty conversation and braces me up. He has such a talent. Many spoke here but could anyone make you laugh? If there is one person in our Cabinet who can make others laugh, it is brother Dindigul Sreenivasan. Our Ministry is strong because he is there with us. And it remains energetic in the service of the people.

Elder Brother Dindigul Sreenivasan has arranged this event like a party conference. I was truly astonished. The whole auditorium is overflowing in a way as to excel the centenary function of Ponmana Chemmal Puratchi Thalaiviar M.G.R. On my way to this venue, I was accorded reception at 3 places. The crowd there was one and a half times more than this one. So, I extend my gratitude to brother for arranging this wonderful event. I also saw a 'sugarcane grove' and an 'agricultural field' here. He has brought these here. He holds the forest portfolio, a Department that can create such a natural environment. Nature and Forestry should flourish in Tamil Nadu. Good rain is possible only if forests grow. My heartfelt thanks to Brother (Sreenivasan) who has completely identified himself with Nature, and to his supportive brigade.

My grateful regards to Hon'ble Minister for Health brother Dr. Vijayabaskar who was a great support for the conduct of this event in an excellent way, Secretary of the Health Department who stood by the Minister, Hon'ble Minister for Revenue Thiru. Udhayakumar who acquired the needed land immediately, District Collector, Officers of the Departments of Revenue and Public Works Department and to all the good hearts that supported this scheme.

Nandri, Vanakkam.

Tamilarasu

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Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu **Thiru. Edappadi K. Palaniswami** inspected the Omanthurar Government Medical College Hospital at Omanthurar Government Estate in Chennai on 27.03.2020, after it was converted into a 500 bed COVID-19 Hospital to treat Corona Virus infected patients.

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